ACTS

Introduction

AUTHOR: ***Acts*** is indeed a continuation of Luke's Gospel. We could well refer to the Gospel as Volume One and Acts as Volume Two. In Acts 1:1 ***"the former treatise"*** addressed to Theophilus (Luke 1:3) is a reference back to Luke's Gospel.

Internal evidence, particularly the "***we"*** passages of Acts (Acts 16:10-17; Acts 20:5-21; Acts 20:18; Acts 27:1-28) confirm Luke as the author. Luke by profession was a physician. He is the only Gentile author in the New Testament. He was an eyewitness to many of the events in the book and was Paul's co-worker.

BACKGROUND: The book of Acts begins where the gospel left off at the resurrection and ascension of Jesus into heaven. It takes up the story there and shows the establishment of the Kingdom (the church) and its growth. It is often called ***"the book of conversions"*** because it shows how people in the first century became Christians.

Various titles given the book include:

"The Acts of the Apostles"
"The Acts of the Holy Spirit"
"The Ecclesia Established, Evangelizes and Expands"
"The Message and Method of New Testament Evangelism"
"The Great Commission In Action"
"The Book of Evangelism"
"How To Get Into Christ"

Luke's Gospel	=	*Christ*
Luke's Acts	=	*How to get into Christ*
The Epistles	=	*How to stay in Christ*

"A Book of Beginnings"
"Book of Conversions"
"Acts of Apostles" (Some Acts of Some of the Apostles)

CHARACTER: The book is historical and written in narrative form. The history of the Bible is HIS STORY and the pivot point of the Bible around which all things revolve is the Cross.

[For the charts accompanying this "Walk" lesson see the "Walk" series online at:
http://home.hiwaay.net/~wgann/walk
or http://www.rogersvillecoc.org/resources

The Old Testament says "Someone is coming."
The Gospels say "Someone has come."
The Epistles say "Someone is coming again."

The Book of Acts is a very important book in the New Testament. From the book we glean much background material for the epistles. We see the important theme of early preaching (the resurrection), fulfillment of prophecy and a number of miracles.

DESIGN: The book shows the progress of Christianity from Jerusalem to all Judea, and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. The commission of the risen Lord had already been reported by Luke (Luke 24:46-49) and here is the description or how it was accomplished.

The ***key verse*** of the book is Acts 1:8. This verse is actually like Luke's Table of Contents, or outline for the book.

The book was probably composed in about AD 61/62. It begins with the history of AD 29/30, the year of our Lord's death, and ends following two years of Paul's imprisonment at Rome about AD 62.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF ACTS:

I. Spread of the Gospel in Palestine with **Peter** as leader. Ch. 1-12

II. Spread of the Gospel Outside Palestine with **Paul** as leader. Ch. 13-28

A CHRONOLOGY BY CHAPTER
(You may need to see this FULL PAGE for the chart to line up correctly.)

ACTS
35 Years of Church History

Key Verse: Acts 1:8 **Author: Luke**
Key Word: "Witness" **Date written: A.D. 62**

DATE:	PLACE	PERIOD	Chapter	
29	Jerusalem	Birth of the	1	Jesus taken back up into heaven church
			2	Pentecost - Holy Spirit
		Growth	3	Gate Beautiful - lame man healed
		thru	4	Peter & John arrested
		Testing	5	The lie told
		"	6	Widows neglected
		"	7	Stephen
33	Judea	Great	8	Philip's preaching
	and	Persecution	9	Saul's conversion
	Samaria	Gospel to	10	Cornelius' conversion
		the Gentiles	11	Peter reports
			12	Herod
45	1st Paul & Barnabas		13	Cyprus & Antioch
	Journey		14	Lystra & Derbe
	Jerusalem		15	Jerusalem council
	2nd	Paul & Silas	16	Philippi
	Journey		17	Athens
			18	Corinth
	3rd	Paul & Silas	19	Ephesus
	Journey		20	A farewell address
	Jerusalem		21	Paul arrested in Jerusalem
	"		22	Stairway sermon
			23	Plot on Paul's life
	Caesarea		24	Felix
	"		25	Festus
	"		26	King Agrippa
62	On way to Rome		27	Shipwreck
	ROME		28	Rome

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÷Act 1:1

Luke = 14.45 % of the NT
Acts = 12.66 % of the NT
TOTAL = 27.11% of the NT was written by the Gentile Luke a Total of 2155 verses

Paul = 25.22 % or 2032 verses
John = 17.80 % of the NT (Gospel, epistles, Revelation)

Best Commentary, Gareth Reese's Commentary on Acts

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In the first book -- The word "**first**" is used when speaking of the "first" of two or more. Some wonder if Luke was planning another volume to take up where Acts leaves off.

The word "**book**" is used in a technical sense of a work that covers more than one papyrus roll. This refers to the Gospel of Luke.

Theophilus -- The name means "Lover [or "friend"] of God" Since he is called ***"most excellent"*** in Luke 1:3 (Acts 23:26; Acts 26:25) he may have been a government official for whom Luke is providing a legal brief. This has caused some to speculate that Luke wrote both volumes as a legal brief for ***Theophilus*** Acts 1:1; Luke 1:3 who was either Paul's lawyer or the official who heard his case for Nero's court. One can note the number of times Paul comes in contact with government officials and no Roman ever found Paul guilty; Felix, Festus, Gallio, Sergius Paulus, and one could add the time at Philippi, the city officials at Ephesus, Roman soldiers at Jerusalem and aboard Paul's ship to Rome, as well as King Agrippa, etc.

Some think it is an anonymous name and Luke's writing was intended for every "Lover of God." Or that Theophilus may have been a patron of Luke's book who would see to the circulation of a large number of exact copies.

that Jesus began to do and teach, -- Jesus practiced and then taught. He did not do as the Pharisees Matthew 23:3. The disciples called Jesus "a prophet mighty in ***deed*** and in ***word***" Luke 24:19.

÷Acts 1:2

until the day -- The phrase of "*did and taught*" is understood in the sense *and continued* doing so **until the day**, etc.

when he was taken up, -- This refers to Jesus' ascension recorded also in Luke 24:50-53.

after he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit -- Christ through the Holy Spirit inspired the apostles to continue preaching and teaching Jesus' message.

The *commandment* referred to here is probably what is called "the great commission." (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-48).

to the apostles whom he had chosen. -- The apostles are name in Acts 1:13. Their calling or selection is recorded in Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16.

÷Acts 1:3

To them he presented himself alive -- Luke emphasizes the reality of Jesus' physical, bodily resurrection (compare 1 Corinthians 15). His resurrection and its implications then become the heart of the apostles' message (e.g., Acts 2:24, Acts 2:32; Acts 3:15; Acts 17:31)

after his passion [suffering] -- Reference is to the crucifixion.

many [infallible; convincing] proofs -- Irrefutable and convincing evidence, of His resurrection. The word doesn't occur anywhere else in the NT In Greek authors it denotes an infallible sign or argument by which anything can be certainly known. Jesus' post-resurrection appearances to His disciples established beyond a doubt that He was physically alive. They knew his death was real, and afterwards saw the scars; they talked with him, traveled with him, and ate with him, etc. John 20:30.

during forty days -- There are no less than 13 different recorded appearances of Jesus to His disciples during this time between Jesus' resurrection and his ascension back to the Father. The implication is that there were several others as well. After 40 day, Jesus led them out toward Bethany (Luke 24:50), to the Mount of Olives Acts 1:12.

speaking of the kingdom of God -- This implies, it is obvious, there was much unrecorded teaching Jesus gave his apostles. The kingdom of God was the central message of Jesus' teaching during his three-year ministry. He predicted that some in his hearing would see in their lifetime the kingdom come with power (Mark 9:1).

÷Acts 1:4

And while staying with them -- The alternative reading, "eating with them," is preferred by some [NLT; NCV] (cf. Acts 10:41; Luke 24:42-43) . The fact that Jesus ate provides additional proof of His bodily Resurrection.

he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem -- Because their own prophets (Isaiah 2:3) had said "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

but to wait for the promise -- The promise regarding the King's coming in the power of Holy Spirit, Luke 24:49; Mark 9:1; Matthew 3:2; cf. John 14:26. Which foretold the coming of the kingdom of God, Acts 1:3.

the promise of the Father, -- Jesus repeatedly promised that God would send the apostles His Spirit (Luke 11:13; Luke 24:49; John 7:39; John 14:16, John 14:26; John 15:26; John 16:7).

which ... you heard from me, -- This promise is alluded to (Luke 24:49) and found in (John 14:16-21, 26; John 15:26-27; John 16:7-15).

÷Acts 1:5

John baptized with water, -- Information regarding John's baptism is found in Matthew 3:11 where he prophesied the coming baptism of the Holy Spirit. These word are a repetition of what John the Baptism had said earlier when he compared his baptism with the baptism Christ would administer (Matthew 3:11; John 1:33).

before many days -- These word of Jesus were probably spoken not long before His ascension. The time between Jesus' ascension back to heaven and the sending of the HS on Pentecost was about 8 days. (Jesus' crucifixion was associated with the Passover, and fifty days later was Pentecost.)

you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit -- Baptism has to do with the method of the Holy Spirit's reception, and the measure of power or supernatural endowment.

This message to the apostles was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:1-4.

1. Jesus was given the Holy Spirit "without measure" John 3:34. NIV "without limit".

2. The apostles were given the Holy Spirit to be guided by it, John 14:26, John 16:13-14; and to impart it's miraculous nature to others on whom they laid their hands, Acts 8:14-15; Acts 8:18; 2 Timothy 1:6; Romans 1:11; etc. Such miracles, signs and wonders confirmed their preaching Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4; Romans 15:19; etc.

3 Some Christians were given supernatural spiritual gifts 1 Corinthians 12:1 ff; 1 Corinthians 14:1 ff Romans 1:11; etc. by the laying on of the apostles' hands Acts 8:14-15; Acts 8:18; 2 Timothy 1:6; Romans 1:11;

4. The Holy Spirit leads still leads us today through the inspired writings given to us by the apostles and prophets of the New Testament. God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit are all said to "dwell" in us as we follow their teaching and live holy and godly lives that imitate them. cf. Ephesians 3:17

÷Acts 1:6

when they had come together, -- The "they" are the apostles. This is another day than that spoken of in the previous verses. The apostles are together with Jesus on the Mount of Olives, as verses 9 and 12 show.

they asked [were asking] him, -- They understood that the kingdom of God would be inaugurated by the Messiah and like the people may have expected a political fulfillment of this kingdom (cf. John 6:15).

will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? -- cf. John 18:36. It appears the apostles still had the concept of a *temporal dominion* for Jesus' kingdom just as the Jewish population who looked for a nationalistic restoration of David's kingdom and the throwing off of the yoke of foreign domination. (John 18:36)

They also knew that Ezekiel 36 and Joel 2 connected the coming of the kingdom with the outpouring of the Spirit whom Jesus had promised. In Jewish expectations, the restoration of Israel's political fortunes would be marked by the activity of God's Spirit.

KINGDOM
"At hand"- Matthew 3:2,
To come in first century with "Power"- Mark 9:1,
But "Power" was to come with Holy Ghost- Acts 1:8,
This happened on the day of Pentecost- Acts 2:1-4.
The Kingdom was in existence in Paul's day- Colossians 1:13.
It is the Church- Matthew 16:18-19.

÷Acts 1:7

not for you to know times or seasons -- Jesus answers the first part of their question, "Is it at this time?" by saying "It is not for you to know... but wait in Jerusalem." Jesus then echos his teaching of Matthew 24:36 and Mark 13:32.

the Father has fixed by his own authority. -- The apostles, and all God's people, shouldn't speculate on God's time-table. (Even as many still do today.) In a subtle way Jesus stresses that the apostles were to revise their thinking about God's divine program and leave the matters to Him. (John 18:36)

÷Acts 1:8

you shall receive power -- In Mark 9:1 Jesus had prophesied the kingdom would come with power during the lifetime of some assembled there with him.

The word "power" (δύναμιν); is specially used of the power of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 6:8) and as used here it refers to the display of miracles (Acts 2:22; Acts 4:7; Acts 19:11). The "power" Jesus here speaks of, and the "Baptism with the Holy Spirit" mentioned in previous verses are the same thing.

when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; -- Literally, "You shall receive the power of the Holy Spirit coming upon you." (It is not that the power and the Spirit were something separate.) This comes to pass on the day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2:1-4. They would be guided into all truth by the Holy Spirit, John 16:7; John 16:13.

you shall be my witnesses -- They had the mission to be "witnesses" to Jesus' preaching and resurrection; the word "witnesses" *martures* also means ***martyrs***. (Luke 24:48; John 15:27). They "bore witness" to the life, instructions, death, and resurrection of Christ. A "witness" tells what he knows. These men were thus qualified to tell all parts of the world the things they knew about Jesus.

in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria -- The first half of the book of acts deals with the gospel being preached in these areas (chapters 1-12).

and to the end of the earth. -- The last half of the book of Acts (chapters 13-28) tells of the spread of the gospel to the far corners of the Roman empire under the preaching of Paul.

In verse 8 we have Luke's broad outline for his writing of Acts. It could be called the "table of contents" for Luke's book of Acts.

The preaching done in:

1. Jerusalem - ch. 1-7
2. Judaea and Samaria - ch. 8-12
3. Uttermost part of the earth - ch. 13-28

÷Acts 1:9

when he had said this, -- In Luke 24:50-52, Jesus left them while He was speaking a blessing on them, and they in turn "worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy." His ascension takes place on the Mount of Olives, the hill overlooking Jerusalem to the west, and Bethany to the east (Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:12).

as they were looking on, -- Here he now ascends in open daylight, in the presence of the apostles as witnesses. The complement of eleven apostles (and perhaps others with them, Acts 1:22) are witnesses to his ascension back to the Father.

he was lifted up, -- Jesus rises from being earth-bound (this had been his mission since Luke 2:13-16) and returns into heaven to the place of his pre-incarnate glory. (John 20:17; Ephesians 4:10; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 4:14; 1 Peter 3:22)

and a cloud took him out of their sight. -- To Luke more important than the location of Jesus' ascension is the significance that "a cloud received him out of their sight."

The cloud undoubtedly symbolizes the shekinah (see Exodus 24:16-17), the visible manifestation of the divine presence and glory at Sinai. Such a cloud hovered above the tabernacle in the wilderness as a visible symbol of the glory of God that dwelt within the tabernacle (cf. Exodus 40:34); it also enveloped Jesus and three of his disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration as a visible sign of God's presence there and his approval of his Son (cf. Mark 9:7-11).

Something similar is presented here: as the Lord ascends He is enveloped by a cloud; the visible manifestation of God's presence, glory, and approval is seen.

Perhaps rightly we think of this cloud receiving Jesus as a bright beautifully fluffy cloud. But we ought not to think of this picture when we read about "clouds" elsewhere in the Bible; for generally they are clouds of judgment, and we should probably visualize clouds like those that come with storms or tornadoes; as when God comes riding on a cloud (of judgment) into Egypt **Isaiah 19:1**, or in **Revelation 1:7;** See **Mark 13:26; Matthew 24:29 Joel 2:2; Zephaniah 1:15.**

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For Heaven's side of His ascension, and Jesus' return home, see Psalms 24:7; Daniel 7:13.

The actions taking place in heaven upon his arrival there is told us in **Revelation 12:7-10**. (See Ephesians 4:8-12 and notes there; for what came from Jesus' victory over death., see 1 Corinthians 15:54-55).

÷Acts 1:10

And as they were gazing intently into the sky -- Luke describes the disciples as "looking intently up into the sky as he was going." They were continuing to strain hard to see Jesus as long as possible. Even after He had been lost from sight, they kept on looking toward the sky.

while He was going [went up], -- The preposition is not in the Greek, which has simply, *as he went*. Their eyes were so fixed on the spot, and were so intent on catching another glimpse of Him that they didn't notice when two angel messengers took their stand beside the apostles.

two men in white clothing -- They are called men, but the dress of these figures and their message suggests the apostles recognized them as angels (compare Mark 16:5; Luke 24:4; John 20:12). The white clothing is the emblem of the purity of heaven.

stood beside them. -- Standing by/with the apostles. (As if in assurance that God's presence and favor would always be with them, Matthew 28:20). Angels appeared at His birth, His temptation, in Gethsemane, at the tomb, and here at His ascension.

Acts 1:11

and said, -- The two men (angels) standing with the apostles spoke these words to them.

"Men of Galilee, -- All the apostles were from Galilee except for Judas, who had killed himself by this time (cf. Acts 1:18).

why do you stand looking into heaven? -- They were looking intently into the sky. Note how the word "heaven" is used in two senses in this passage. Here it first means "sky."

This Jesus, -- This same tried friend who had been so faithful to them would return. They ought not, therefore, look with despondency on His departure.

who was taken up from you into heaven, -- These angels affirm that it is the Jesus whom they knew that would return. The glorified, ascended Christ is still the Jesus of Nazareth. He remains the God/man. The angels affirm he has gone into "heaven," that is, the "heaven" where His Father is. He was now at the Father's right hand. Mark 16:19.

The Jesus whom the disciples had known now had a heavenly existence (cf. note the double use of the phrase "into heaven").

will come in the same way [in like manner] as you saw him go into heaven." -- ***"Will come"*** **is a**nother promise of Jesus' return. Daniel 7:13-14; John 14:3; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10. Jesus will not be separated from this world forever; He will return, followed by a Judgment Day.

Jesus will come again as He left, on the clouds of heaven (cf. Matthew 16:27; Matthew 24:37-39; Matthew 26:64; Mark 8:38; Luke 21:27; John 21:22; 1 Corinthians 15:23; 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 4:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; 2 Thessalonians 2:1, 2 Thessalonians 1:8; James 5:7-8; 2 Peter 1:16; 2 Peter 3:4; 2 Peter 3:12; 1 John 2:28; Revelation 1:7). The Second Coming of Jesus is a recurrent and major theme of the N.T.

Acts 1:12

Then they returned to Jerusalem -- Where they were told to wait until they received the promise of the Holy Spirit. Luke 24:49; Luke 24:52; John 16:7;

from the mount called Olivet, -- Located on the eastern side of the Kidron Valley. On the western slope of this mount was the garden of Gethsemane (a place of an olive press) where Jesus had been arrested. The Greek word translated "Olivet" means "olive orchard," or "olive grove." On the eastern slope were the villages of Bethpage and Bethany.

which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away; -- The Mishnah sets this at about 3/5 of a mile, the longest distance Jews were allowed to walk without breaking the Sabbath, Exodus 16:29 (*Mishnah Eruvin* 4.8).

We wonder why Luke would mention this tid-bit of information unless it was the Sabbath Day (Saturday) on which Jesus ascended and he in informing us this is as far as they traveled on that day in keeping with the Law. If so, Pentecost would come on the first day of the week eight days later.

Acts 1:13

and when they had entered, -- They returned to the city of Jerusalem.

they went up to the upper room, -- This "upper room" was probably the same room where they met for the Lord's last supper with them.

where they were staying, -- It was probably the house belonging to Mary, the sister of Barnabas and mother of Mark, where they assembled in Acts 12:12; see Colossians 4:10; Acts 12:25. It was a large house and the owner had servants. Such large complexes kept an upper room for guests. Especially in Jerusalem they kept them for visitors who came to the feasts. This household appears to have been disciples.

One clue that makes us think Mary's house was also the house of the Last Supper, is Mark's statement in Mark 14:51 where it is believed that Mark is referring to himself. If Mark was the one following Jesus and the apostles to the garden, it would probably have been that he followed them from his home when they left in the night. Probably already in bed he only grabbed a linen cloth (sheet) to wrap around his naked body and followed them.

Most likely it is also the same house where the disciples met (hid) after the Lord's crucifixion John 20:19; John 20:26.

Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. -- Their calling is recorded in Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16.

Acts 1:14

All these with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, -- Luke often shows the importance of prayer to the Lord's disciples and the church (e.g., Acts 4:24-30; Acts 16:25; Acts 21:5).

Jesus had taught his disciples to pray (Luke 11:1; Matthew 6:5-9 ff.) and they learned its importance from His example.

with one accord -- The "one mind" denotes the entire harmony of their view and feelings. There were no schisms, no divided interests, no discordant purposes.

together with the women -- Doubtless they included Mary Magdalene, Mary the wife of Clopas, the sisters Mary and Martha, and Salome. Some of the apostles' wives also may have been present (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:5). These women are mentioned in this informal way because they would be remembered by those like Theophilus, who had read Luke's first volume.

The mention of women in Luke's account (Acts 9:36; Acts 16:14; Acts 21:9) reflects his emphasis that all people (Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, men and women) are included in the community and mission of the Church.

and Mary the mother of Jesus, -- The reference here to "Mary the mother of Jesus" continues Luke's interest in Mary begun in Luke 1:26-27 though Mary's name does not appear again anywhere in the N.T.

Luke lets us realize he interviewed witnesses (Luke 1:2) and it appears certain that he interviewed Mary and got first hand information that she remembered cf. Luke 2:19; Luke 2:51.

and with his brothers -- The brothers of Jesus became his disciples also after his resurrection.

Jesus' half-brothers, named in Mark 6:3 as James, Joses, Judas, and Simon. James was one of the leaders of the Jerusalem church (Acts 12:17; Acts 15:13-22) and author of the epistle that bears his name. Judas (Jude) wrote the epistle of Jude.

At this time, they were new believers in Jesus as God, Savior, and Lord, whereas only eight months earlier John had mentioned their unbelief (John 7:5).

Acts 1:15

In those days -- Some time during the 8 day interval between Jesus' ascension and the day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2.

Peter stood up -- Peter is portrayed throughout Luke and Acts as one of the leaders and spokesman among the apostles, although he did not possessed sole authority (Acts 15:6; Acts 15:22-23) or was beyond rebuke (see Galatians 2:11-14).

among the brethren [disciples] -- This would be the disciples meeting in the upper room, and not a reference to Jesus' half-brothers mentioned in verse 14.

(the company of persons was in all about a hundred and twenty), -- This is the approximate number of the disciples meeting together. This number would seem too large to meet in an upper room, so most commentaries believe they were meeting in some location of the temple compound, such as Solomon's porch (Acts 3:11; Acts 5:12; in the temple daily in Acts 2:46).

The group must have included the eleven Apostles, the women who accompanied Jesus, and other disciples from Jesus' preaching and healing ministry. Some of Luke's eye-witnesses may

have been among this number (see Acts 21:16). There may have been many more believers (disciples) still up in Galilee, or even in Judea or Samaria (cf. John 4:40-42).

÷Acts 1:16

"Brothers, the Scripture -- References to "Scripture" in the NT usually always refer to the OT (example Matthew 5:17-20; 2 Timothy 3:15-17). (Except 2 Peter 3:15-16, where Peter alludes to Paul's writing also as Scripture.)

had to be fulfilled, -- Peter is saying what Jesus also claimed, that Scripture "cannot be broken" (John 10:35), meaning that God's Word will always be found true, and everything prophesied by the Holy Spirit "had to" come to pass.

"had to be" is *dei*, which means of necessity. It is imperfect active indicative. The term means "it is binding," "it is necessary," "it is inevitable."

The gospel and its growth is not a chance occurrence, but it was the plan of God from the foundation of the world, and it is the fulfillment of OT Scripture (LXX usage).

which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David -- Peter is attributing inspiration to **David** (2 Peter 1:21) in writing the Psalms. Psalms 41:9, Psalms 55:12-15.

concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. -- The verb "became" suggests what Judas did was his own act. Judas' action would be well known to the other apostles but the circumstances might not be known perfectly by many of the other 120 present. Some commentaries understand this information was given by Luke to help Theophilus and his readers have a more complete understanding.

÷Acts 1:17

For he was numbered among us, -- (This is continuing Peter's remarks.) Judas was an apostle of Jesus, John 6:71. The only one from Judea while the others were from Galilee.

"Numbered among us -- As David prophesied, it was a "friend" who betrayed the Lord. cf . Psalms 41:9, Psalms 55:12-15.

and was allotted his share in this ministry. -- Judas Iscariot, as a member of the Twelve, had a part in the ministry of Jesus. Jesus knew he was the betrayer however. (John 17:12; Matthew 26:24; John 6:64, John 6:70-71; cf. Acts 2:23; Luke 22:22.)

allotted his share [portion] -- The word "portion" carries the idea of something delegated by God.

÷Acts 1:18

(Now this man bought a field with the reward of his wickedness; and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. -- This verse and verse 19 are place in parenthesis and do not appear to be a part of Peter's discourse but are explanatory words inserted by Luke for the instruction of Theophilus and his other readers.

the reward of his wickedness -- This expression is only found in NT here and 2 Peter 2:13-15. Thirty pieces of silver was the going price for a slave in the first century AD. (Note that twenty pieces was paid for Joseph in Genesis 37:28.)

falling headlong -- From the tree or gallows on which he hung himself (see Matthew 27:3-8). It was "this man's" reward money that the chief priest use to purchase the field, thus, it was "blood money." Acts 1:19.

burst open in the middle -- All this information comes under the heading "And it become known" found in the next verse. Judas may have hung himself so high that when the rope or limb broke he fell a good distance to the ground. Others suppose his body hung there until it and the rope decayed before falling.

÷Acts 1:19

And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, -- The way in which the purchase money was obtained, caused the name to be changed from “the Potter’s Field” to “the Field of Blood,” all people recognizing the fitness of the new name.

so that the field was called in their language Akel'dama, that is, Field of Blood.) -- Luke gives the translation of "Akeldama" as "Field of Blood." This is Aramaic, which was the primary language spoken by Jews in the first-century AD. The purchase price of the field was the price of the "blood" of Jesus betrayed by Judas.

Akeldama ... Field of Blood -- Traditionally, the field is located south of Jerusalem in the Valley of Hinnom, where that valley crosses the Kidron Valley. The soil there was good for making pottery; thus, Matthew identifies it as “the potter’s field” (Matthew 27:7, Matthew 27:10).

÷Acts 1:20

For it is written in the book of Psalms, -- Peter claims two psalms foretell God’s judgment upon Judas (citing Psalms 69:25) and the need for his replacement (Psalms 109:8). These are psalms of David (compare Acts 1:16).

These psalms speak of false companions and wicked men who have become enemies of God’s righteous servant.

'Let his habitation become desolate, -- Psalms 69:25. Psalms 69 was applied variously within the early church to Jesus the Christ, the Servant of the Lord and Righteous Sufferer (Psalms 69:9 is quoted in John 2:17 and Romans 15:3; and Psalms 69:22-23 is quoted in Romans 11:9-10).

and let there be no one to live in it'; -- Psalms 69:25. This eminently Messianic Psalms is here combined with another, Psalms 109:8.

and 'His office let another take.' -- Psalms 109:8. So here in v.20 we have another example of the use of messianic material, to explain the legitimacy of replacing a member of the apostolic band.

his office [bishopric] let another take -- [ἐπισκοπὴν, 'office' or 'charge'] The English transliteration of ἐπίσκοπος, *bishopric* is the literal rendering of ἐπισκοπή; but it is meant to be taken in its wider and more general sense.

This same office is called a διακονία (a deaconship), and ἀποστολὴ (an apostleship) in Acts 1:17 and Acts 1:25.

:Acts 1:21

So one of the men who have accompanied us -- The new apostle must have been a companion of Jesus and His disciples from the beginning of His earthly ministry to the end. He must be able to bear witness to all that occurred in Jesus' ministry.

during all the time that the Lord went in and out among us, -- Judas' replacement had to have personally interacted with Jesus during His earthly ministry. This is so that the new apostle can be a legitimate and effective eyewitness alongside the other apostles, as Jesus had specified (see Acts 1:8).

Notice that it shows the presence of other believers besides the Twelve who followed Jesus closely throughout His earthly ministry.

the Lord went in and out -- This expression was used in the OT to describe a position of leadership among the people (see Deuteronomy 31:2; 1 Samuel 18:13). We have the similar expression used here and again Acts 9:28. Cp. also John 10:1.

:Acts 1:22

beginning from the baptism of John -- A qualification for the "witness" to be selected apostle to fill Judas' place. None today could meet this requirement to be an "apostle" John 15:27;

baptism of John -- The way this is stated has led many to believe that the disciples had been baptized by John. But it probably is simply a reference to Jesus' beginning when He was baptized by John. (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-23).

The successor had to have familiar and unhindered association with Jesus from John's baptism to Jesus' ascension. Perhaps not all the Eleven themselves could claim association with Jesus from the days of John the Baptist (John 1:35-51 suggests that about half could). But they evidently wanted to make quite sure that there would be no deficiency on this first point.

until the day when he was take up from us -- A reference to Jesus' ascension back into heaven, Acts 1:9.

one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection." -- A second requirement for Judas' successor was that he had to have seen the resurrected Christ. The Resurrection was central to apostolic preaching (cf. Acts 2:24; Acts 2:32; Acts 3:15; Acts 5:30; Acts 10:40; Acts 13:30-37).

Acts 1:23

And they put forward two, -- The eleven apostles together found "proposed" two men. There may have been others that were considered (Luke 10:1) but these two must have stood out equally to meet the qualifications.

Joseph call Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, -- Barsabbas means "son of the Sabbath." Justus ("the righteous") was Joseph's Roman name. Many Jews in the Roman Empire had both a Jewish and a Gentile name.

Neither of these figures appears elsewhere in the OT. Although the narrative of Acts does not provide details about Joseph (Justus) and Matthias, it implies that both men were worthy candidates to replace Judas among the disciples.

and Matthias. -- The name Matthias means "gift of God." The ancient historians Eusebius and Epiphanius claim Matthias was among the seventy of Luke 10:1.

A work called 'The Traditions of Matthias' is referred to by Clemens of Alexandria ('Strom.,' ii. 163). It was said of **Matthias**, by Nicephorus (howbeit, a late document) that he preached and suffered martyrdom in Ethiopia.

Acts 1:24

And they prayed and said, -- Here we are not to conclude that Luke has recorded all the words of their prayer but only the main point, in the same way as in the speeches which he reports he has only preserved a brief abstract of the speakers' arguments and language.

"You, Lord, -- While it is not clear linguistically whether God the Father or Jesus is here being addressed in prayer by the vocative "Lord," it is most natural to understand the same referent for the title here as in Acts 1:21, "the Lord Jesus."

Furthermore, Luke seems to drawn the parallel consciously by using the verb "to choose" for those selected by Jesus in Acts 1:2 and for this replacement of Judas.

who know the hearts of all, -- By the lot the final decision was left in the hands of God (cf. Proverbs 16:33), who alone could know which of these two, both having the necessary qualifications as far as man could see, would prove the more excellent Apostle. The same expression is applied to God, Acts 15:8.

show which one of these two you have chosen-- Literally, "show of these two the one whom *thou didst choose*." They thought it proper that the Lord, who had chosen Judas, should also choose his successor.

The casting of lots was a common OT method of determining God's will (cf. Leviticus 16:8-10; Joshua 7:14; Proverbs 18:18; *see* Proverbs 16:33). This is the last biblical mention of lots— the coming of the Spirit made them unnecessary.

Acts 1:25

to take the place in this ministry and apostleship -- A similar phrase as in Acts 1:17, "a share [place] in this ministry" (διακονία).

from which Judas turned aside [fell away], -- The Greek has only a verb which literally is equal to *transgressed*. The use of παραβαίνω for "to transgress, fall away from, turn aside from," and the like, is frequent in the LXX. (Exodus 32:8; Deuteronomy 17:20, etc.).

to go to his own place." -- This is an euphemism for "being lost in hell," the place of torment for the wicked. Satan used him for his purposes (cf. Luke 22:3; John 13:2; John 13:27), but Judas is responsible for his choices and actions (cf. Galatians 6:7).

This is an awful phrase, showing that every man has the place in eternity which he has made for himself in time.

Acts 1:26

And they cast lots for them, -- The practice of casting lots is known from the OT. The OT depicts certain types of lot casting not as a matter of chance but as an opportunity for God to make His will known in an unmistakable way (e.g., Leviticus 16:8; Joshua 18:6-8).

This is the last biblical mention of lots— the coming of the Spirit made them unnecessary.

and the lot fell on Matthias' and he was enrolled [added] -- The Greek word used here, *synkatapsēphizomai*, denotes an official enrollment into the ranks of the apostles: Matthias becomes one of the twelve apostles.

with the eleven apostles. -- The word "apostle" literally means ***"one sent"***, but in an official sense, one who is designated to officially represent some authority, such as a king, or a nation.

The word is like our "ambassador." Such official representatives are provided documentation or credentials to confirm their official status. The credentials the Lord provided his "apostles" (official representatives) was the ability to work "*miracles"* as He did, and such miracles were "*wonders"* (which amazed the people) and "*signs*" which stood as credential evidence as His representatives. **Mark 16:20; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Acts 5:32; Hebrews 2:3-4.**

Christ Himself is called the "***apostle***" of God, or the special representative sent by the Father, Hebrews 3:1; John 3:17; John 3:34

In another sense, Barnabas is also referred to as an "apostles," since he had been sent by the church, Acts 14:14; Acts 13:1-4; Acts 15:22.

Paul was Christ's ***apostle*** to the Gentiles, 1 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:1. Christ appeared to him enabling him to be a witness of the Lord's resurrection and provided him the credential of an apostle, Acts 22:15; Acts 26:16;

apostles. -- Notice also that this is the last word in chapter 1, and the noun is the antecedent of the "they" in Acts 2:1. It is the apostles who are baptized with the Holy Spirit in chapter 2, (Acts 2:1) and not the 120 disciples mentioned as being in the "company of persons" in Acts 1:15.

Acts 2:1

See Topic Sermons_Gann.topx "Great Chapter in the Bible"

Ch 2 *- This chapter is the bridge between Christianity in prospect and Christianity in practice.*

Ch. 2 *- "The **Hub** of the Bible" Everything in the Bible before this was looking forward to this, everything afterwards looked back to it. It was called the **"beginning" Acts 11:15.***

When the day -- A Great Day 1) The day of Pentecost; 2) A Historic Place - Jerusalem; 3) A Divine Occurrence - Acts 2:1-4.

Pentecost -- Fiftieth part of a thing. Fifty days after Passover Day**.** Leviticus 23:15-16 ff; Numbers 28:26. Pentecost always came on a Sunday, in March or April. In the Jewish Talmud, Pentecost is recognized as the day the Lord gave the Law at Mt. Sinai.

they were all together -- The proper antecedent of this pronoun is the ***Apostles***, Acts 1:26 the last word (also last word in the Greek) in the previous verse. Some false doctrines have resulted from believing the entire 120 were speaking in tongues but this does not hold up under a close scrutiny of the scriptures.

one place -- The place where the apostles were told to wait, Jerusalem Acts 1:4, for the promise of the Holy Spirit Luke 24:49.

The ***place*** was probably in the temple at the hour of prayer, Acts 2:15.

See "Locating Pentecost - Part 1" - Chris McKinny
https://www.bibleplaces.com/blog/2020/05/locating-pentecost-part-1/

See The Bordeaux (SW France) Pilgrim to Jerusalem in AD 333.
http://galynwiemers.blogspot.com/2010/07/bordeaux-pilgrims-333-ad-account.html4

Acts 2:2

suddenly there came from heaven a sound -- Notice the direction, from heaven, and the suddenness of this blast.

a sound like a mighty rushing wind, -- It was not a wind, but the sound like one. Wind blows horizonal, but this came down from heaven. People have described the sound of rushing wind like a loud train. This would certainly get attention.

and it filled the entire house -- This could be a part of the temple where they had come to worship at the hour of prayer Acts 2:15. The disciples, being too numerous to meet in an upper room met in parts of the temple. (Acts 3:11; Acts 5:12; in the temple daily in Acts 2:46).

where they were sitting. -- The location where they gathered "together in one place" (Acts 2:1).

Acts 2:3

And there appeared to them tongues -- With the sound of a rushing wind, came the appearance of fire dividing itself upon the twelve apostles.

Tongues refers to the shape. **Cloven**, not because each was forked, but one great sheet of light (like fire) that dispersed into twelve parts.

tongues as of [like as] fire -- Not actual fire, but had the appearance of fire that spread out on each of the apostles.

Fire was often the symbol of divine presence in the OT There was the burning bush (Exodus 3:2-5); the pillar of fire that guided Israel by night through the desert (Exodus 13:21); the fire on Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:17); the fire that hovered over the wilderness tabernacle (Exodus 40:38).

distributed and resting [sat upon each] on each one of them -- -- The first verb "divided" [G1266] is first aorist tense, and shows the "distribution" was a momentary thing. The verb "resting" or "sat" [G2523] may imply a permanence, or "to have fixed one's abode."

Significant is Luke's statement that the light-like fire was first unified, but then "separated and came to rest on each of them."

The Feast of Pentecost had developed in Judaism as a celebration of the giving of the Law to Moses on Mt. Sinai. Therefore the loud wind and fire may be a reminder of the awesomeness of YHWH descending on Horeb (cf. Exodus 19:16).

Acts 2:4

And they were all -- The "they" and "all" here is a reference to the apostles (Acts 1:26; Acts 2:7; Acts 2:14).

filled with the Holy Spirit -- In OT times prophetic utterances were regularly associated with the Spirit's coming upon particular persons for special purposes (cf. Numbers 11:26-29; 1 Samuel 10:6-12; et al.). This is the third miraculous event this day.

In Judaism, however, the belief arose that with the passing of the last of the writing prophets the spirit of prophecy had ceased in Israel, and God now spoke to his people only through the Torah. But Judaism also expected that with the coming of the Messiah there would be a special outpouring of God's Spirit.

filled -- The emphasis is on the passive verb "they were filled," for it was Jesus who filled the apostles with the Spirit. This is the realization of the promise, "he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

This filling gave the apostles the endowments they needed to qualify them to do the work of an apostle.

and began to speak in other tongues [languages] -- The apostles are enabled by the Holy Spirit to speak in the various languages and dialects of the nations assembled and understood by them. This was the third miraculous event recorded here.

Some see what happened at Pentecost as a reversal of what happened at Babel. (Genesis 11:1; Genesis 11:9)

> "Sin ruined the unity of language at Babel Genesis 11:1 ff; there Babel brought discord, darkness, separation. Pentecost brought light, understanding, and unity."

This event on Pentecost is referred to as the ***beginning*** in Acts 11:15. This outpouring of the Holy Spirit was upon Jews. And nothing like it occurred again until Acts 10:44-45 when it was upon Gentiles. To find a likeness to what had happened at Cornelius' house, Peter had to refer back to this day of Pentecost.

tongues -- The speech of the apostles was not some ecstatic utterance, but languages understood by people present, see Acts 2:8;

as the Spirit gave them utterance -- The Holy Spirit inspired them and guided them in what to say. It was in fulfillment of Luke 12:12; John 16:13; Acts 6:10.

÷Acts 2:5

Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews -- Numerous Jews from all over the Mediterranean world came to this important festival. The population of Jerusalem swelled from about one hundred thousand inhabitants to around a million during each of the three festivals. [W. Reinhardt, "The Population Size of Jerusalem and the Numerical Growth of the City," in *Acts in its Palestinian Setting,* pg 262–63.]

devout men -- Good God-fearning men had made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem to worship God and celebrate Pentecost.

from every nation under heaven. -- "Every nation" would mean from every part of the entire Roman empire. Faithful Jews who had been scattered among all the nations had come to Jerusalem for the Passover and many stayed for Pentecost as well.

This is A Great Audience - v. 5-11

1. It is remarkable because of its background; Jews who understood the significance of the message, and ready to hear.
2. It was remarkable because of its potential. Fifteen sections of the Roman Empire are represented. These could take the Gospel back to their home communities. They were personal witnesses of the great event of this day and the birthday of Christ's church (Acts 2:47) and had the opportunity to become charter members themselves (such as Mnason, see various translations of Acts 21:16).

÷Acts 2:6

And at this sound [noised abroad] -- The sound like the gusty wind (Acts 2:2) prompted the gathering of a multitude.

This again assures us the gathering in Acts 2:1 was somewhere in the temple compound for there to be a crowd gathering of hundreds or thousands (Acts 2:41).

the multitude came together, -- The sound was what drew the crowd to the place where the apostles were.

and they were bewildered [confused; confounded] -- Being amazed and perplexed, the crowd was "thrown into an uproar." It was hearing the apostles speaking in the various languages that "bewildered" them.

because each one heard them speaking in his own language. -- Each pilgrim in the crowd recognized the language or dialect from his own country. The miracle was in the apostles' ability to speak the various languages, not in the ears of the hearers.

The twelve probably spread out among the multitude and national language groups naturally gravitated to those they could best understand.

÷Acts 2:7

And they were amazed and marvelled [wondered] -- This describes the effect of the miracle upon the people. Probably many of these foreigners had not been exposed to the many miracles of Jesus.

saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? -- And they meant by that, how could these *unpolished*, and *uneducated* men [fishermen] speak these various languages so fluently!

The Judean Jews, and probably the foreigners as well, could recognize where they from, by both their dress and accent. Some in the crowd may have even recognized some of the individual apostles.

÷Acts 2:8

And how is it that we hear, -- The miracles was not in the ears of the hearers, but that the apostles were enabled to speak in these various languages of those present from all the corners of the Roman Empire.

each of us in his own native language? -- Since the disciples who were speaking were Galileans, it bewildered those who heard, because the disciples could not by themselves have learned so many different languages.

There is no description here of any jargon or incoherent speech, we are told of utterances tested by the ears of those who had spoken these languages from their youth.

÷Acts 2:9

Men gathered from sixteen different sections of the Roman Empire are represented as witnessing this great day of Pentecost.

The geographical order for this list of nations is from east to west. Sixteen places are mentioned but not necessarily that many different languages.

Par'thians -- For it will be observed that the different nationalities, whose tongues were spoken by those rude Galileans, are enumerated in a certain winding geographical order. Beginning with the **Parthians**, furthest to the north-east, once the most powerful nation of the East. This would be modern Iran.

Medes -- Persians, westward from the Parthians.

E'lamites -- Another part of Persia, toward the southwestern part of the Parthian Empire.

and residents [dwellers] of Mesopota'mia, -- The name signifies land between the rivers, meaning the Tigris and the Euphrates, which would include Babylon, and old Assyria. Many Jews still lived in this area, descendants of those who were in captivity and who never returned to Palestine (cf. 2 Chronicles 36:22-23).

Judea -- Even here people from Galilee had a slightly different dialect or recognizable difference in their speech Luke 22:59; Mark 14:70;

and Cappado'cia, -- North eastern district of Asia-Minor, or what is now turkey.
Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia. All were districts in Asia Minor, in what is now Turkey.

Pontus -- North central district, just west of Cappadocia, in what is now Turkey.

and Asia, -- The Roman province of Asia (not the continent) which was located in the western part of present day Turkey.

÷Acts 2:10

Phryg'ia -- Just south and east of the province of Asia.

and Pamphyl'ia, -- Located in the southern part of present day Turkey.

Egypt -- North Africa. Many Jews lived there, especially in the city of Alexandria. The nation then covered the same general area as modern Egypt.

and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyre'ne, -- West of Egypt, along the North African coast.

and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, -- Rome was the capital of the Roman Empire and had a sizeable Jewish population. Perhaps some of the believers we read about in Paul's letter to the Romans were present on this day. (See the list in Romans 16:3 ff)

proselytes -- They were Gentile converts to Judaism. Jews in Rome wee especially active in seeking such converts.

÷Acts 2:11
Acts 2:11

Cretans -- This was a large island in the Mediterranean close to Turkey. It may have stood as a collective term for all the islands of the Aegean.

and Arabians, -- This would refer to the descendants of Esau. There were numerous Arab tribes spread out across the great peninsula which stretches between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf.

we hear them telling in our own tongues -- They not only witnessed the miracle of the apostles speaking in languages they had not studied, but were able to clearly and without difficulty understand their message.

the mighty works of God." -- The mighty works would include the miracles of Jesus, and probably their message about Jesus' resurrection.

÷Acts 2:12
Acts 2:12

And all were amazed and perplexed, -- The original means they did not know what to make of what they saw and heard. They had no doubt of the facts, for their ears bore testimony that in their own various mother-tongues they heard great works of God were being proclaimed.

saying to one another, "What does this mean?" -- All of the "God-fearing Jews" (Acts 2:5), whose attention had been arrested by the signs at Pentecost and whose own religious heritage gave them at least some appreciation of them were amazed, and wanted to understand what was happening.

÷Acts 2:13
Acts 2:13

But others mocking said, -- While the "devout" Jews wanted to understand what was happening, others, being spiritually insensitive, only mocked, attributing such phenomena to drunkenness.

These mockers were probably the local leading Jews who had led in the persecution of Jesus and his disciples.

mocking -- There is the question whether they actually accused the apostle of being drunk, or in derision some in the crowd laughing at these Galileans and saying "these men can't even hold fresh juice without getting drunk!"

"They are filled with new wine." -- Some men babble a lot when drunk, and of such the apostles are accused. But imagine if you could drink French wine and speak French; or drink Italian wine and speak Italian, etc.

new wine -- *"gleukos"*. Scholars disagree whether this "wine" is fermented, or not. Most argue that for fresh wine to be preserved it had to be fermented (which is not true). The word "wine" is used of both fermented and unfermented grape product.

However it seems that the mockers are accusing the apostles of being intoxicated. (Ephesians 5:18).

See Patton, Bible Wine p. 15 and also the Dictionary or Roman and Greek Antiquities, "The sweet unfermented juice of the grape was termed *gleukos*." See also Smith's Dictionary of the Bible "wine." Isaiah 49:26; Amos 9:13.

According to Patton, "wine" [*yayin*] refers to a grape product whether fermented or unfermented. "Strong drink" [*šekar]* in the OT refers to a drink (dates, pomegranate, etc.) other then grape, fermented or unfermented.

Note: The item on the "Lord's Table" is referred to as "fruit of the vine" and never as "wine."

÷Acts 2:14
Acts 2:14

But Peter standing up -- Here we find Peter using the keys (Matthew 16:18-19) given to him by Christ to open up the door to the Kingdom. Peter was also privileged to use the keys to open the door of the Kingdom to the Gentiles in Acts 10 at the house of Cornelius.

Jokes tend to picture Peter at the gates of heaven determining who will get in through the pearly gates, but here is the real occasion when Peter uses the keys on the day of Pentecost to open up God's Kingdom (the church) to men. Acts 2:47; Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 11:15; Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:9;

Peter -- Peter is apparently the apostle speaking the language of the Judaeans and the most common language among those gathered there. It is the outline of Peter's message that is preserved for us in this chapter.

with the eleven, -- Peter and the eleven make up the 12 apostles, showing that Matthias was standing with the others at Pentecost (Acts 1:23-24). Peter is the spokesman, but still part of the Apostolic group. He does not speak alone or on his own authority.

lifted up his voice and addressed them, -- Indicates that Peter spoke loudly, above the mockery cries. This is his first recorded gospel sermon in Acts. It shows us the content and emphasis of the preaching of the Apostles. These apostolic sermons form an important part of Acts.

"Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. -- Peter addresses both the local Jews and those who are visiting Jerusalem for Pentecost.

give ear -- The word (ἐνωτίζεσθε, G1801) is found only here in the New Testament, but frequent in the LXX. He pleads for the crowd to listen and he will make something known to them.

÷Acts 2:15

Acts 2:15

Peter's Sermon

Introduction - He refutes their accusations of being drunk.
1. He appeals to common sense - v. 15 too early in the day
2. He appeal to the scripture - v.16-21 and tells them exactly what it was that was happening.

For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, -- Peter refutes the false charge leveled against the apostles by the mockers.

It shows us that false charges should not be ignored, but countermanded.

since it is only the third hour of the day; -- It was **9** AM, the morning hour of prayer in the temple when many visitors for the feasts (Passover, Pentecost) would be gathered.

In antiquity this was a powerful refute to the charges of the mockers, much more so than it would be today. People usually got drunk at night (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:7), at banquets, (1 Peter 4:3) not at 9 a.m.

÷Acts 2:16
Acts 2:16

But this is that -- Peter explains the phenomena of the tongues as prophetic fulfillment of Joel's words.

Nothing in prophecy can be more accurately explained than when one inspired man stands up and explains what another inspired prophet was speaking about years before.

this what was spoken by the prophet Joel: -- Peter quotes Joel 2:28-32 to explain the events of Pentecost.

Peter affirms that "the last days" that Joel spoke about was now present. He refers to them as "these days" in Acts 3:24.

÷Acts 2:17
Acts 2:17

'And in the last days -- The last days of that dispensation ushered in by Moses at Sinai.

These last days began with the announcement of the births of John and Jesus and the appearance of John the Baptist preaching the Kingdom was nigh at hand Matthew 3:1-2; Mark 1:1-4; The law is nailed to the cross and the Gospel is ratified by the blood of Christ and new covenant goes into effect on this day of Pentecost (Acts 2:47; Colossians 2:14).

All the trapping of the Law of Moses, animal sacrifice, the Aaronic priesthood, the temple, all come to its full end in AD 70 with the destruction of the temple as the Lord Himself prophesied Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21.

Sometime people think "we are living in the last days" today. No, the last days were those spoken of by Peter. Many misunderstand "the last days". When used in the plural it refers to the

last days of Judaism. The singular, "the last day" is used by John to refer to the day of resurrection and judgment when Christ returns John 6:40; John 6:44; John 11:24; John 12:48.

the last days it shall be, -- Isaiah 2:2; Joel 2:28; Micah 4:1; Daniel 2:44; all fulfilled in Acts 2.

God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit -- This is the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles (Jews) Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8 that was prophesied by John the Baptist.

upon all flesh -- Meaning that both Jews and Gentiles would be recipients of the Spirit. Jews, on Pentecost, and Gentiles in Acts 10. God was not a respecter of persons in this regard Acts 10:34.

and your sons and daughters -- Acts 21:9; Many various spiritual gifts were imparted to believers through the laying on of the apostles' hands. (see Acts 8:14-15; Acts 8:18; Acts 21:8-9).

shall prophesy ... visions ... dreams -- Acts 9:10**;** Acts 11:5**;** Acts 18:9**;** Acts 21:8-9**;** 1 Corinthians 12:10, 1 Corinthians 12:28, 1 Corinthians 14:26-31

÷Acts 2:18
Acts 2:18

yea, and on my menservants -- New Testament prophets included men like Agabus, Barnabas, Silas, and others unnamed.
Acts 11:27; Acts 13:1; Acts 15:32; Acts 19:6; Acts 21:10; etc.

and my maidservants in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. -- Acts 19:6; Acts 21:8-9;

prophesy -- To prophesy is to teach, preach, by the inspiration of the Spirit. (2 Peter 1:21).

÷Acts 2:19
Acts 2:19

And I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; -- This is apocalyptic language of the prophets to speak of the coming of God for judgment (and to some blessings.)

wonders in the heavens -- These wonders, are to portray a work of God among the people in bringing upheaval to their society. Not literal signs, but figurative to vividly stir their mind.

blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; -- Such language invoked images of war and catastrophe to some ruling power.

> **Vs. 19-20** The overthrow of nations and the upheaval of governing authorities are often pictured in the Old Testament in such language. This is a visual-metaphorical way of speaking to the Eastern mind. We in the West tend to be literal and often misunderstand the graphic language of the Jewish prophets. Consider Zephaniah 1:15; Joel 2:10; Joel 3:15; Isaiah 13:9-10; Isaiah 34:4-5; and Amos 9:13; Joel 3:18;

÷Acts 2:20
Acts 2:20

the sun shall be turned into darkness -- This terminology is used of the downfall of higher political officials. (Exodus 10:22; Joel 3:15; Amos 5:18).

and the moon into blood, -- The way to express the upheaval of leaders and officials in a country.

before the day of the Lord comes, -- This language was frequently used by the prophets to describe signs of God's coming judgment. The nation had rejected the Son of God and this would bring the end to life under the Law as they had know (Matthew 21:39-43; Matthew 23:34-36; Matthew 23:37-38).

the great and manifest day. -- A great judgment upon a power. It would be a notable day. Peter suggests that in such language the time of God's judgment was coming.

In Matthew 24:29 the same description used with regard to the fall of Jerusalem.

Vs. 19-20 The overthrow of nations and the upheaval of governing authorities is often pictured in the Old Testament in such language. This is a visual-metaphorical way of speaking to the Oriental mind. We in the west are too literal and often misunderstand the graphic language of the Jewish prophets. Consider Zephaniah 1:15; Joel 2:10; Joel 3:15; Isaiah 13:9-10; Isaiah 34:4-5; and Amos 9:13; Joel 3:18;

When did this overthrow and upheaval take place? Remember that the Lord came to destroy the works of Satan 1 John 3:8; Luke 10:18; John 12:31; Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 12:7; and with His victory over the grave and return to the glory of Heaven Satan is cast down and the doom of such principalities and powers is assured.

÷Acts 2:21
Acts 2:21

And it shall be that whoever -- Salvation through the gospel is not limited to Jews, but is open to all who will accept it Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:19-20; Revelation 22:17.

calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' -- To commit to the Lord's Gospel in contrast to all other means of salvation. John 14:6; Hebrews 5:9; Matthew 7:21; It is erroneous and short-sighted to teach salvation by "*prayer only*" from this passage; that is not what it means to "call on the name of the Lord."

See on 1 Corinthians 1:2. To "call upon the name" is to turn to Christ in faith and obedience to the Good News He brought to mankind. (Matthew 7:21).

Question: Is the "salvation" in this context, **1)** eternal salvation from sins, or **2)** physical salvation when the fall of Jerusalem comes. Eusebius (H. E. III. 5. 3) tells how the Christians were warned to leave Jerusalem before the destruction, and went into a city of Perea called Pella.

÷Acts 2:22
Acts 2:22

"Men of Israel, hear these words: --

Vs. 22 The **thesis** of Peter's sermon. In Acts 2:36 we see the conclusion Peter wants his audience to understand. This is where Peter is going with this sermon, and the material in Acts 2 between vs. 22 and vs. 36 are the five points of his argument (or evidence) to prove his conclusion.

#1 Evidence of Miracles - v.22
#2 Evidence of the Resurrection - vs. 23-23
#3 Evidence of Inspired Scripture - vs. 25-31
#4 Evidence of Witnesses - v.32
#5 Evidence of the Holy Spirit's descent - Vs. 33

Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God -- Peter describes Jesus in a similar way elsewhere in Acts (e.g., Acts 3:6; Acts 4:10; Acts 6:14). He emphasizes that Jesus' character and His works were often openly demonstrated and widely known to His audience. John 3:2.

with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know-- Jesus' miracles and wonders and signs were real, and worked publicly among the people. John 3:2;

Miracles: occurences that are **s**upernatural in nature. By a variety of supernatural means and works, God validated Jesus as the Messiah (cf. Matthew 11:1-6; Luke 7:20-23; John 3:2; John 5:17-20; John 8:28; Philippians 2:9; see Acts 1:3; Acts 2:19).

Wonders: The effect of supernatural events on the people, their amazement.

Signs: The evidential value of such miracles. They gave creditability to the one doing the supernatural miracles. (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4).

EXAMPLES OF CONVERSION:

1. Pentecost- Acts 2:22 & Acts 2:36-47
2. Samaria- Acts 8:4-13
3. Ethiopian eunuch- Acts 8:26-39
4. Paul (Saul)- Acts 9:1-20 & Acts 22:6-16
5. Cornelius– Acts 10:1-48 & Acts 11:1-18
6. Lydia- Acts 16:13-15
7. Philippian jailer- Acts 16:23-34
8. Corinthians- Acts 18:8

:Acts 2:23
Acts 2:23

this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, -- Although the Jews and Romans violently rejected Jesus and His claims, Peter asserts that God's purpose for man's redemption through Jesus' crucifixion was planned and could not be overthrown (compare Isaiah 53:12; Luke 22:22; 1 Peter 1:20-21).

foreknowledge -- God had resolved on the plan before it took place. God knew what such wicked men would do.

you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. -- An indictment against "men of Israel" (Acts 2:22), i.e., those unbelieving Jews who instigated Jesus' death, which was carried out by the Romans. That the Crucifixion was predetermined by God does not absolve the guilt of those who caused it.

÷Acts 2:24
Acts 2:24

#2 Evidence of the Resurrection *- v. 23-24 Acts 2:23-24*

But God raised him up, -- Peter uses this fact as evidence that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. The ***resurrection*** is a historical fact. The ***empty tomb*** was a reality. The resurrection was the main point ***preached*** in all the sermons recorded in Acts.

having loosed the pangs of death, -- The resurrection of Jesus is attributed directly to God. NASV reads "putting an end to the agony of death," which term can mean literally, birth pains.

It may be a picture of Jesus' release from the snares of death, or it clutches, see 2 Samuel 22:6; Psalms 18:4-6; Psalms 116:3.

because it was not possible for him to be held by it. -- Because of His divine power (John 11:25; Hebrews 2:14) and God's promise and purpose (Luke 24:46; John 2:18-22; 1 Corinthians 15:16-26), death could not keep Jesus in the grave.

Since He is life (John 14:6) and the only righteous one who did not deserve the wages of sin (Romans 6:23), Jesus could not be defeated by death.

÷Acts 2:25
Acts 2:25

#3 Evidence of OT Inspired Scripture *- Vs 25-31*

For David says concerning him, 'I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; -- Peter cites Psalms 16:8-11, a psalm of David, stating that the reference to the Holy One in Psalms 16:10 speaks of the Messiah's resurrection (compare Acts 2:31).

Psalms 16:8-11. Problem: David used the first person, but he was not speaking of himself. David held a position of exalted dignity and honor. To prove David was not speaking of himself but of the Christ, Peter uses two arguments.

1) Peter uses the sepulchre argument - Acts 2:29
2) Peter uses the "promise" argument - Acts 2:30

Vs. 30 Therefore -- David was speaking of Jesus! (Psalms 49:15; Psalms 86:13;)

÷Acts 2:26
Acts 2:26

Vs. 26-28 -- *Words ascribed to the Messiah though uttered by inspiration by David. Psalms 16:9; (Psalms 49:15; Psalms 86:13;)*

therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; -- The psalm shows that David had complete confidence in God. Peter's object in quoting this, was to show that David foresaw the resurrection of the Messiah, that is, Jesus.

moreover my flesh will dwell in hope. -- The Lord was speaking of His resurrection prophetically through David (see Psalms 16:10). The Lord's own resurrection gives hope to all the rest of the saints.

÷Acts 2:27
Acts 2:27

For thou wilt not abandon my soul -- "Soul," "*psuche"* ψυχή is used here in the sense of the disembodied spirit.

to Hades, -- Hades. ᾅδην. Upon Jesus' death His spirit went into Hades, the abode of departed spirits. From Jesus' teaching in Luke 16:19-31 there were two abiding places for such spirits in Hades, a place called "Abraham's bosom" Luke 16:22 and "paradise" in Luke 23:43 and separated from this place by a gulf that could not be crossed. Luke 16:26 was a place in hades where there was torment Luke 16:23.

But Jesus came to destroy death Hebrews 2:14 and was victorious over Satan 1 Corinthians 15:54; 2 Timothy 1:10; Colossians 2:15 in his resurrection. During the three days between his death and resurrection our Lord had not yet ascended to the Father John 20:17, and when he did Luke 24:49-51; Acts 1:9; Mark 16:19; he took with him the righteous souls of those in "Abraham's bosom" (or "paradise") into heaven, into the presence of the Father Ephesians 4:8-10; Luke 4:18; Psalms 68:18; Colossians 2:15; 2 Corinthians 2:14; Hebrews 2:15; Luke 11:21-22; Isaiah 53:12; Colossians 1:13;

With Jesus' victory over death and Satan, he now had the keys to death and hades Revelation 1:18. The consequence of Jesus' victory is that for the saint who dies in the Lord now his spirit goes to be with Christ and await the resurrection of his body 2 Corinthians 5:6-8; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23. Apparently these bodyless spirits will be given a white robe to cloth them until the time of the resurrection of their bodies Revelation 6:9-11; Revelation 7:13.

For the Christian today there should be no fear of death, for it is to go and be with the Lord 1 Corinthians 15:55. 2 Corinthians 5:6-8.

The wonderful truth for the Christian today is that because of this victory we will not spend any time in Satan's dominion of that hadean world, but will die to be in the Lord's presence awaiting the time of the resurrection and judgment. 2 Corinthians 5:6-8 2 Corinthians 5:8, Philippians 1:23, etc.

Those who hold to the teaching of Luke 16:19-31 as the situation for today are overlooking the accomplishment and significance of Jesus' victory over the grave which occurred after the time frame of Luke 16. The passage in Luke is describing the situation up until Jesus' victory and resurrection.

(A mystery is still the understanding of Matthew 27:52-53.)

See note on Ephesians 4:8

nor let thy Holy One see corruption. -- This is a **r**eference to the body of Christ; His body to be re-animated by the spirit before decay sets in, or to be without decay.

÷Acts 2:28
Acts 2:28

Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; -- "The ways of life**" w**ith reference to the Messiah meant "You will restore me to life." Proverbs 2:19;

thou wilt make me full of gladness with thy presence.' -- There is joy and comfort in view of the resurrection. Psalms 21:6; Psalms 42:5

÷Acts 2:29
Acts 2:29

#3 Evidence from OT Inspired Scripture
1) Peter uses the sepulchre argument - v. 29

"Brethren, I may say to you confidently of the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. -- Peter reasons that since David died and remains in the grave, his words in Psalms 16 cannot refer to himself.

David -- David's tomb stood on the southern end of Mt. Zion, the city of David, 1 Kings 2:10; Acts 13:36, The point being that David's body saw corruption, so he was not speaking of himself.

÷Acts 2:30
Acts 2:30

#3 Evidence from OT Inspired Scripture
2) Peter uses the Promise Argument - v.30-31

Being therefore a prophet, -- David spoke by inspiration and of the future before him, 2 Samuel 7:13; the Messiah would be one of David's descendants, Romans 1:3;

and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne, -- Peter reminds his audience of the Davidic covenant, in which God promised that one of David's descendants would reign forever (2 Samuel 7:14-15). God kept this promise in Jesus, David's descendant, whose reign would not end (Luke 1:32-33).

"Fruit of his loins," the Messiah, Jesus, was in the fleshly lineage of David Romans 1:3.

"One of his descendant," the Christ was to sit on his throne**.** Christ is raised, resurrected, and in heaven. He is sitting on David's throne in heaven! Mark 16:19. The Lord's throne is established in heaven, where Christ is reigning today, Psalms 103:19; Hebrews 1:8.

Christ was raised from the dead and has ascended to sit on the throne, at God's right hand, Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33; Acts 7:55; Acts 7:56; Romans 8:34; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 10:12; 1 Peter 3:22;

÷Acts 2:31
Acts 2:31

he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades [hell] -- The Greek *hades*, ᾅδην , John 20:17, where the spirit of Jesus went after his death on the cross. See the note on Acts 2:27.

nor did his flesh see corruption. -- David prophesied of the Messiah's resurrection and his body not seeing corruption, Psalms 16:10.

÷Acts 2:32
Acts 2:32

#4 Evidence of the Witnesses - v.32

This Jesus God raised up, -- A reference to Christ's resurrection. Cf. Acts 2:24; Acts 10:40; Acts 17:31; 1 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 1:20.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ was one of the apostles' strongest emphases (cf. Acts 3:15, Acts 3:26; Acts 4:10; Acts 5:30; Acts 10:40; Acts 13:30, Acts 13:33-34, Acts 13:37; Acts 17:31; Acts 26:23). They proceeded to bear witness to what they had seen and heard as Christ had commanded and foretold (Acts 1:8).

and of that we all are witnesses. -- ***"We"*** is emphatic. We can see in our mind's eye Peter sweeping his hand around in reference to all the apostles there speaking with him on that day.

witnesses -- Eye witness testimony is among the finest evidence in a court of law. God put eye-witness testimony in His record. Acts 3:15; Acts 4:33; Acts 5:32; Acts 10:39-41; Luke 24:48; John 15:27; Deuteronomy 19:15; Matthew 18:16.

÷Acts 2:33
Acts 2:33

#5 Evidence of the Promised Holy Spirit

Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, -- Christ was resurrected and raised up to heaven to the right hand of God to sit on David's throne. The apostles were witnesses of both Jesus' resurrection and ascension into heaven Mark 16:19; Ephesians 1:20-22; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 1:3;

Christ was raised and ascended to sit on the throne, at God's right hand, Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33; Acts 7:55; Acts 7:56; Romans 8:34; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 10:12; 1 Peter 3:22;

and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, -- Christ received the promise made to David by the Holy Spirit and now the apostles have received the promise of the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:4; (cf. 1 John 2:25; John 6:63).

he has poured out this which you see and hear. -- The Comforter, the Holy Spirit, had now come upon the apostles as prophesied John 14:26; John 15:26; John 16:7; and in fulfillment of Joel's prophecy quoted in Acts 2:17.

Many present listening to Peter had themselves witnessed the flames like as of fire, and heard the sound like a rushing wind, and now they all were hearing the apostles speaking in foreign languages.

÷Acts 2:34
Acts 2:34

For David did not ascend into the heavens; -- David's prophecy was not about himself, but the Messiah, and Jesus fulfills David's words Psalms 110:1; Matthew 22:43-44; David is not on his throne in heaven, Christ is!

but he himself says, 'The Lord said to my Lord, -- Peter cites Psalms 110:1 to assert that this psalm of David shows that David was aware that someone far greater than himself would fulfill God's promises to him of an everlasting kingdom, someone who was also David's Lord.

The NT cites and alludes to Psalms 110 more than any other OT passage. The apostles and the early church recognized that it predicts the Messiah's vindication.

Sit at my right hand, -- An oriental expression for sharing power. Hebrews 1:8; Hebrews 1:13.

÷Acts 2:35
Acts 2:35

till I make thy enemies [foe] -- Christ's last enemy to be conquered was death, 1 Corinthians 15:25-26, and he demonstrated his victory by his resurrection. (Colossians 2:14-15; Ephesians 1:20-21).

All three Synoptic Gospels tell of Jesus quoting Psalms 110:1 and interpreting it as a messianic passage and applying it to himself (Matthew 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44).

a stool for thy feet.' -- To put the foot on the neck of an enemy is an expression for complete victory. This was an Oriental custom (cp. Joshua 10:24). Christ's enemies are to become His footstool.

For the concept of the "footstool" see the picture of King Tut's footstool. It pictures the traditional enemies of Egypt under his feet, on his footstool. Psalms 110:1; Ephesians 1:22; 1 Corinthians 15:27.

÷Acts 2:36
Acts 2:36

Vs. 36 <u>The Conclusion to Peter's Sermon</u>

This is the summary, and the point Peter is proving by all the evidence he has presented in his sermon.

Therefore [NASB; NIV; NKJV]-- When you see ***"therefore"*** it means a conclusion. You should stop and see what it is "there for"! In light of all the evidence Peter has presented he now states the conclusion.

Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly -- "Know" **is** Present, active, imperative, 3rd person, singular, for a command to his audience to ***believe***. Just as in <u>Acts 2:38</u> ***repent***, and ***be baptized*** are in the imperative.

An appeal can be made to the house of Israel, for they had known the prophecies, and received the promises.

that God has made [appointed; constituted] him both Lord and Christ, -- "Lord" meaning sovereign master; "Christ" meaning the Messiah, the anointed one of God. With the proclamation of Jesus as Lord and Messiah, Peter reaches the climax and conclusion of his sermon.

this Jesus whom you crucified." -- The very person you crucified! The Jewish mob who had killed Jesus had grossly misunderstood Him. God still used their actions to authenticate Him by his resurrection and ascension (compare Isaiah 52:13–53:12).

This is the close of Peter's reasoning: Jesus, who had been crucified, God has raised from the grave, God has exalted to heaven and set Him on His own right hand, and thus showed that He is the Lord and the Anointed One.

Acts 2:37

<u>Acts 2:37</u>

<u>5. A Great Response - vs. 37-41</u>

Vs. 37 - *The effect of Peter's sermon*

Now when they heard *this,* -- Was Peter's sermon interrupted? Some say it was interrupted by this cry of those listening. But it seems from the "therefore" and Peter's statement or summary in v. 36 that Peter had drawn his message to a conclusion.

they were cut to the heart, -- The Greek word for "cut" means "pierce" or "stab," "pricked," "to pierce, to sting, to smite" and thus denotes something sudden and unexpected, a sudden acute grief!

In grief, remorse, and intense spiritual conviction, Peter's listeners are stunned by his indictment that they had killed their Messiah. "Those who have been cut to the heart" and those who are "the humble of heart" realize their need to make things right with God.

and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, -- As witnesses of the resurrection and ascension, the crowd recognize the apostles as the spokesmen (leaders) for the Messiah.

Again it appears that all twelve apostles have been speaking, else why would the listeners address "all" the apostles?

"Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?" -- A pointed question. Acts 9:6; Acts 11:14; Acts 16:30; What could be done to escape the penalties which must fall on those who have so sinned against light and knowledge; who have had the true Light in their midst, but have comprehended it not, and have crucified the Lord of glory. (John 1:5; 1 Corinthians 2:8).

÷Acts 2:38
Acts 2:38

And Peter said to them, "Repent, -- Christian repentance means to change one's mind with a result that changes one's way of living and acting. G3340. This is in the imperative mood, thus a command. Peter preached this in accordance to Jesus' instruction Luke 24:47.

and be baptized every one of you -- The Greek word *baptizo,* G907, in modern versions is transliterated "baptize" and the meaning of the Greek word is left untranslated. The word "baptize" means to "immerse". An immersion; an overwhelming; a burial Romans 6:4. Peter preached this in accordance to Jesus' instruction. Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:1.

Baptism puts one into a new relationship with the Lord, Galatians 3:26-27; 2 Corinthians 5:17.

in the name of Jesus Christ -- ἐπὶ *epi,* Upon the name; in response to the command of Jesus; upon their confession of faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Romans 10:10.

The practice of baptism under John the Baptist looked forward to the cross whereas Christian baptism looks back to it. Christian baptism is done "in the name" of Christ, by His authority and not John's.

for the forgiveness of your sins; -- "For" is εἰς, *eis,* and denotes the object of repentance and baptism, which is the remission of the sins. John's baptism in Mark 1:4 was for the same purpose. Christ's death and the shedding of his blood was for the same purpose. The passage in Matthew 26:28 is a parallel grammatical construction.

and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. -- Is the gift the Holy Spirit himself Acts 10:45 and Acts 11:17, or a "gift" from the Holy Spirit 1 Corinthians 12:1 Romans 12:6; etc.

Some could maintain that the "gift" from God (the Holy Spirit) is Eternal Life, 1 John 2:25; John 6:63.

"You shall receive" -- Is the "gift" for everyone receiving the "remission of sins" or is it directed to Peter's audience that day for as many as the apostles laid their hands on? Acts 8:14-17; Acts 8:18; Romans 1:11; 2 Timothy 1:6.

Study: The Gift of the Holy Spirit - Acts 2:38

The first three rules of Bible Study are said to be: 1) context; 2) context; 3) and context. In the context of Acts 2 we have the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles which is accompanied with their ability to speak the languages of the people assembled in the temple (Acts 2:4; Acts 2:8). Later we see "many wonders and signs" done by the apostles (Acts 2:43) also validating them as messengers of truth from God (Hebrews 2:3-4).

We must remember that **Acts 2:28** was spoken to those present on the day of Pentecost. While the commands for repentance and baptism are seen in other examples of conversions and would apply to all believers, the offer of the gift of the Holy Spirit was limited to only those

who had an apostle's hand laid on them (Acts 8:14-17; Acts 19:5-6; 2 Timothy 1:6). The particular "gifts" that were bestowed through the apostles are spoken of in **1 Corinthians 12-14,** etc.

To indicate how important it is to keep the "context" of a statement in place consider, Genesis 6:14 to Noah; John 11:43-44 to Lazarus; and Matthew 10:19 and Mark 13:11 to the apostles. Always consider the context and specifically to whom a statement, or promise, etc. is made.

See the Notes At:
2 Corinthians 1:21-22 2 Corinthians 5:5; Ephesians 1:13-14; Ephesians 3:17; Ephesians 4:30;

See James 2:24 note "Being Saved" Justified by Grace.

÷Acts 2:39
Acts 2:39

For the promise -- Is the reference to the ***promise*** of the Holy Spirit, Joel 2:28 which Peter has already alluded to, or to the promise of forgiveness?

Some could maintain that the promised "gift" from God (the Holy Spirit) is Eternal Life, 1 John 2:25; John 6:63.

is to you and to your children -- To Jews, Isaiah 44:3. Acts 2:17 "Sons and daughters". The Holy Spirit in miraculous measure was extended through the laying of the hands of the apostles. See note at Acts 8:17.

and to all that are far off, -- To Gentiles, Isaiah 57:19. (Acts 10). Peter is saying, "Not only is this salvation for you Jews (you and your children), but it is also for the Gentiles (those far off.)" cf. Ephesians 2:13; Ephesians 2:17; and Isaiah 57:19; Isaiah 56:6.

everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." -- The Lord calls everyone, "whosoever will" Romans 10:13; John 6:45; and he calls all men today through the gospel 2 Thessalonians 2:14.

Peter spoke by inspiration but even he himself at this point did not understand God's "calling" to include the Gentiles. (Acts 10:9-15).

÷Acts 2:40
Acts 2:40

And he testified with many other words -- Peter continued to present argument and share his witness to the words and deeds of Jesus..

many other words -- What we have in this chapter is just something of an outline or summary of Peter's message that day. He may have followed the Lord's example of using much more scriptural evidence Luke 24:27.

and exhorted them, saying, -- With his words Peter encouraged them to accept the gospel truth and obey the Lord's commands, Hebrews 5:9; Acts 10:48.

"Save yourselves-- ***"Save yourselves"*** *is* 1st-Aorist, passive, indicative. "Be saved." The way one "saves himself" is by accepting his responsibility in the matter of salvation. God had provided a Savior, man's part is to obey Him Hebrews 5:9; Matthew 7:21. It is the Lord himself who does the "saving.

from this crooked generation." -- A crooked, perverse, corrupt generation. Every generation that turns away from the Lord is crooked. But that generation particularly that Peter addresses since the Lord Jesus himself had been revealed to the Jews who had the Prophets and the Law to foretell His coming, Luke 24:44; Luke 16:29.

÷Acts 2:41
Acts 2:41

Then those who gladly received his word -- Those who "**received the word"** were those that were persuaded and came to faith and repentance.

were baptized; -- They responded to the Lord's command to be baptized in the likeness of His death, and to be resurrected to a new life in Christ, having been forgiven of their sins. Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21.

and that day about three thousand souls were added ***to them.*** -- The Church enjoys an amazing beginning on this first day as a result of Peter's first Gospel sermon. Likely the 3,000 who responded that day to the invitation were but a small part of the great crowd that heard Peter's sermon.

It was the Lord who did the "adding" Acts 2:47; no where do we see "men" voting on who to accept into the church! Ephesians 5:23.

baptized -- Excavations (by C. Warren in the 1860s) around and beneath the temple mount revealed numerous ritual baths and cisterns that would have been available to second temple Jewish worshipers. ("Locating Pentecost - Part 1" Chris McKinny) https://www.bibleplaces.com/blog/2020/05/locating-pentecost-part-1/

÷Acts 2:42
Acts 2:42

6. A Great Life to Live - vs. 42-47

And they continued steadfastly [devoted themselves] -- The passage of time may refer to weeks and days.

in the apostles' doctrine -- The teaching did not originate with the apostles but with the Lord; they were His spokesmen. They not only listened to teaching that came from Christ, they were intent on practicing it.

and fellowship, -- This probably refers to the "sharing" and "giving" of their means. cf. Philippians 1:5; 2 Corinthians 8:4;

in the breaking of bread, -- The Greek reads "THE breaking of THE bread" (there is an article in both places in the original. The context is speaking of the worship services of the church, which makes it most probable this is a reference to their regular observance on the first day of each week of the Lord's supper, a memorial instituted by Christ for his disciples to remember His sacrifice. (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25; Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 10:16.)

Later in v. 46 a similar phrase speaks of their sharing meals together.

and in prayers. -- The Greek reads "THE prayers." The use of the plural seems to indicate recurring times of prayer at fixed hours, cf. Acts 3:1. Day by day they attended the temple and became known as a praying church. (cf. Acts 1:14; Acts 4:24 ff). Their prayers indicate their dependence on God, their hope in the future, and a desire for the advancement of God's work (e.g., Acts 1:24; Acts 12:5; Acts 14:23).

Characteristics of the Jerusalem Church

1. A Learning Church - Acts 2:42
2. A church of Fellowship - Acts 2:42
3. A Praying Church - Acts 2:42
4. A Reverent Church - Acts 2:43
5. A Sharing Church - Acts 2:44-45
6. A Worshipping Church - Acts 2:42; Acts 2:46-47
7. A Happy Church - Acts 2:46
8. A United Church - Acts 2:46
9. A Respected Church - Acts 2:47
10. A Growing Church - Acts 2:47

:Acts 2:43
Acts 2:43

Then fear [awe] came upon every soul, -- "Everyone," "every" might speak of people outside the church as well as the disciples. Just after the brief sketch of the regular worship of the church, we have a statement about the effect of the new life in Christ on both the disciples and the outsiders. It seems that the common people of Jerusalem came to have a godly respect for these followers of Jesus. See Acts 2:47.

and many wonders and signs -- Miracles done for the purpose of confirming their message, Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4. "Wonders" speaks to the effect of amazement and awe of supernatural events the people witnessed. "Signs" indicate events that gave evidential value to such miracles. They gave creditability to the one doing the supernatural miracles. (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4). Such "signs" were promised by the Lord, Mark 16:17.

were done through the apostles. -- We see only the apostles and those on whom they laid hands performing these supernatural wonders and signs. Acts 6:6-8; Acts 8:17-19; 2 Timothy 1:6.

:Acts 2:44
Acts 2:44

Now all who believed were together, -- There was a unity of heart and faith among the disciples.

and had all things in common, -- From Acts 2 through ch. 5 we see that many of the new disciples from the many various parts of the Roman Empire (Acts 2:9-11) remained in Jerusalem to learn more from the apostles Acts 2:42; Many apparently stayed there longer than they expected and did not have the provisions, so they shared together.

This is not teaching a "communism" for Christians for it was a special circumstance. But it does teach that we should have such a regard for one another that we don't let our brothers and sisters go hungry or in need. Acts 2:45; 1 John 3:17;

÷Acts 2:45
Acts 2:45

and sold their possessions and goods, -- Acts 4:32; One such example is given us in Acts 4:36-37.

and divided them among all, as anyone had need. -- From Acts 2 through ch. 5 we see that many of the new disciples from the many various parts of the Roman Empire (Acts 2:9-11) remained in Jerusalem to learn more from the apostles Acts 2:42; Many apparently stayed in Jerusalem following Pentecost longer than they expected and had not brought provisions for such an extended stay, so they shared together.

This is not teaching a "communism" for Christians for it was a special circumstance. But it does teach that we should have such a regard for one another that we don't let our brothers and sisters go hungry or in need. Acts 2:45; Acts 4:32

÷Acts 2:46
Acts 2:46

So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, -- The temple was large enough for the daily assembly of the early church. They may have continued to observe the Jewish daily hours of prayer, Acts 3:1. The temple was a place of public meeting and teaching Acts 5:20-21; Acts 5:25

and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food -- The believers shared their homes and meals together. In the ancient Near East eating together reflected a common commitment to one another and deep fellowship. A meal shared together was both a symbol and a seal of friendship.

with gladness and simplicity of heart, -- These believers were a happy, joyful people united in their faith.

÷Acts 2:47
Acts 2:47

praising God -- We think this was done in song, prayer, and speech. (Colossians 3:16-17; James 5:13; Acts 4:24; Acts 13:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Ephesians 5:19-20; Philippians 1:11).

and having favor with all the people. -- The early church had an attitude of thankful and joyful worship, and demonstrated the love of God to one another in tangible ways. A mass of common

people looked upon the disciples of Jesus with favor. Following chapters show however, that the Jewish religious leaders were very antagonistic toward the early believers.

And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. -- Luke concludes his paragraph on the state of the early church at Jerusalem with the triumphant note that as people were being saved, they were added to the growing number or Christians. Note that it is the Lord himself who adds to his church.

The "day by day" or "daily" indicate there were daily additions to the church in those early months and years. Membership in the church were "those being saved."

The term for church, εκκλησια, is present in the majority of the Greek texts, thought some texts that modern translations rely on do not have the term here. εκκλησια is "the called out assembly." In the Christian sense, those called out from the world to be a different kind of people from the world, a people devoted to the Lord and following His Word 2 Corinthians 6:17.

CHURCH -- Matthew 16:18, Ephesians 5:23-27, Acts 20:28.
The Church is the "Body of Christ," Ephesians 1:22-23, Colossians 1:18; Colossians 1:24,
There is one body- Ephesians 4:4-6, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, Colossians 3:15,
The saved are "Added by the Lord"- not "Voted In," Acts 2:47, 2 John 1:9-10,

÷Acts 3:1
Acts 3:1

Now Peter and John -- Peter and John seem to have had a close friendship, and were a part of Jesus' inner circle. They had also been partners in the fishing business on the Sea of Galilee Luke 5:10.

Many think that Peter was probably the oldest of the group of apostles and John was the youngest.

were going up to the temple -- It appears this event occurs as they were going into the temple. These early Jewish Christians still continued to observe many of the rites of Jewish worship. This was also a good time and place to reach out to many people with the gospel.

at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. -- Psalms 55:17; Daniel 6:10
This would be 3:00 p.m. in the afternoon. A time when many devout Jews would be gathered for prayer and the evening sacrifice. The other two times would be 9:00 a.m. (the third hour, in connection with the morning sacrifices), and 12:00 noon (the sixth hour). [The length of an "hour" varied according to the season.]

÷Acts 3:2
Acts 3:2

And a man lame from birth was being carried, -- This description underscores the seemingly irreversible nature of the man's condition which he had suffered for more than 40 years (Acts 4:22).

His handicap was so severe that he had to be "carried" to his place of begging. Some think the tense indicates he was now in the process of being carried and placed at his usual spot.

whom they laid daily -- People would have been familiar with the man, which further establishes the public nature of the miracle of his healing.

at that gate of the temple which is called Beautiful -- This is thought to be the large ornate Nicanor Gate, which separated the Court of Women from the Court of the Israelites on the eastern side. Apparently the man had a usual place where he begged alms of those going into the temple.

to ask alms of those who entered the temple. -- The only means he had for his livelihood was to beg, his condition was so serious he could not even move about by himself.

Lame from his mother's womb -- He had been lame all his life, over forty years, and undoubtedly well known and recognized in the city.

÷Acts 3:3
Acts 3:3

Seeing Peter and John -- He looks toward the two entering, and the next verse shows the two looking back at him steadfastly. That must have given the man hope, for those not ready to help the man would usually look away!

about to go into the temple -- There were there at the hour of prayer.

he asked for alms -- He made his routine plea to those passing by. Making eye-contact gave him his opportunity. Likely those going to worship would tend to be more grateful to God for their blessings and more sympathetic to this ailing man.

÷Acts 3:4
Acts 3:4

And Peter directed his gaze at him, with John, and said, "Look at us." -- Peter and John ask for his direct attention. Sitting in this place the man had heard and observed much and may have recognized them as disciples of Jesus and come to faith in Jesus himself Acts 3:16 though we are not told of *his* faith.

÷Acts 3:5
Acts 3:5

And he fixed his attention on them, -- Thinking he had a benefactor, the beggar looked expectantly to Peter and John.

expecting to receive something from them. -- He asked for alms, that is what he expected to receive.

> When we ask of God shouldn't we believe we will receive of Him even greater than what we ask, Matthew 6:8; Ephesians 3:20.

÷Acts 3:6

Acts 3:6

But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, -- How different is Peter's claim from wealthy charlatans today who travel around the country with their "healing" crusades! From Acts 2:45 (Acts 4:35) we learn that the apostles where the stewards of fund committed to their charge by generous converts. But Peter either didn't think the funds were for this purpose, or most likely, he didn't have any money on him.

have I none -- Judas had been the one in the group of the apostles who kept the money bag from whence dispense was made to the poor and needy. John 12:6; John 13:29. These funds probably came from those who supported Jesus' ministry Luke 8:3; Luke 24:10; and some were wealthy women like Joanna the wife of Chuza who was Herod's steward.

but I give you what I have; -- We are nowhere told how much time had passed since the day of Pentecost, and this was not the first miracle which Peter wrought (see Acts 2:43).

what I have; -- What did Peter have? He had faith that the Lord had given him authority and power to perform this miracle. (Mark 16:20; John 14:12; Acts 9:33-34; Acts 9:40-42). It was Peter's faith, not the lame man's, whose faith in Jesus' name is mentioned in Acts 3:16.

in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, -- "In the name of" means 'by the authority of'" or "by virtue of the power derived from Him." According to John's account, the name "Nazareth" was included in the title on Christ's cross (John 19:19), and we can see that the place was despised in the eyes of the Jews (John 1:46) from Nathanael's question to Philip.

walk." -- (Some MSS have *rise up and walk*.) Did Peter and John perceive the man had faith in Jesus? Acts 3:16; It was the ***faith*** of Peter and John in Jesus and in the authority He has given His apostles that enabled them to do this Acts 4:10; Matthew 10:1; Luke 9:1; Luke 10:19.

The apostles' miracles were done with the authority given them by the Lord Mark 16:17-18; Acts 4:10;

÷Acts 3:7
Acts 3:7

And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; -- (This sounds like information from a witness. Did Luke interview this man and received this information? Cf. Luke 1:1-2.)

and immediately -- Instantly, not over a long period of recovery. The healing is described as an instantaneous one, accomplishing in a moment.

his feet and ankles were made strong. -- Luke, who is a physician, observes the specific way Jesus' power works instantly to overcome the man's lifelong disability.

his feet and ankle-bones -- The fact that strength was immediately imparted; that the feet, long lame, were now made strong, was a full and clear proof of miraculous power.

were made strong. -- Though from want of use, they must have been withered before.

÷Acts 3:8

Acts 3:8

And leaping up he stood and walked -- The healed man's excitement and joy is clearly seen in this verse. We can see how complete the healing was.

> **And he, leaping up --** This was a natural expression of joy, and it was a striking fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah 35:6.

and entered the temple with them, -- The first direction he walks is with Peter and John into the temple.

walking and leaping -- He is forty years old, but he has the excitement of a child, as we can image his joy in being able to walk and leap.

and praising God. -- The man attributes his healing to God, testifying to the divine power of Jesus.

÷Acts 3:9
Acts 3:9

And all the people saw him walking and praising God, -- There were so many who witnessed the effect of the miracle that it could not be refuted Acts 4:16.

÷Acts 3:10
Acts 3:10

and recognized him as the one who sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; -- Luke has firmly established that the local people with familiar with the man. They clearly grasped that a miracle had taken place; there was no doubt about its authenticity.

and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. -- Although the crowd knew the man was healed, they must have wondered how it came to pass. The crowd is now ready to listen to Peter. This was the design of the miracle, to provide credentials for the apostle's message Acts 3:11.

÷Acts 3:11
Acts 3:11

While he clung to Peter and John, -- He seems to cling to them, not letting them get away. Apparently he wants everyone to know the source of his healing.

all the people ran together to them ... astounded. -- They are amazed and ready to learn all they can about the healing.

in the portico called Solomon's, -- A shaded area surrounding the Court of the Gentiles. It was used for commerce, teaching, and conversation. Acts later records that Christians sometimes gathered there (Acts 5:12).

Josephus tells us (*Ant.* XX. 9. 7) that there was an eastern porch in Herod's Temple called by this name. The mention of this feature in the building is a sign that Luke was one acquainted with the localities about which he speaks, and that the account was written before the fall of Jerusalem, or he would not have said *is called*,

This was also where Jesus had taught about the Good Shepherd (John 10:23). Cf. Isaiah 35:6.

÷Acts 3:12
Acts 3:12

And when Peter saw it he addressed the people: -- The ready crowd gave Peter the opportunity tell the people about Jesus Christ.

"Men of Israel, why do you wonder [marvel] a this, or why do you stare at us, -- Peter didn't want the attention of the people on himself and John to mislead them into thinking the power of healing the man resided in themselves.

as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk? -- Peter wants the people to correctly understand what power was responsible for this marvelous deed. It was not their power, but that of the One they had crucified.

Luke again apparently does not give all of Peter's sermon, but he does give us the main points.

÷Acts 3:13
Acts 3:13

The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, -- Peter begins his oration with the common ground he had with the people gathering around him.

glorified his servant Jesus, -- Peter introduces Jesus as God's "servant" and uses the Greek word here, *pais*, for servant which would call to their mind the Suffering Servant mentioned in Isaiah 52:13.

whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, -- Peter remind them that it was at the hands of the Jerusalem people that the "servant Jesus" was made to suffer. Perhaps some in the crowd had cried "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Mark 15:13-14; Luke 23:21.

when he had decided to release him. -- It was Pilate's desire to release Jesus for he knew he was an innocent man. But Pilate didn't have the inner fortitude to stand again the crowd demanding Jesus be crucified (Luke 23:20-21).

÷Acts 3:14
Acts 3:14

But you -- Note that "you" is emphatic in the Greek. God glorified Jesus; but YOU delivered Him up!

denied the Holy and Righteous One, -- Isaiah frequently describes God as the "Holy One" to show God's distinctive character as well as Israel's guilt in being unfaithful to Him (e.g., Isaiah 1:4; Isaiah 5:24; Isaiah 10:17). By giving to Jesus the title Isaiah uses for God, Peter implies the Messiah's divine character and status.

The sermon focuses on God's Servant, Jesus, whom they disowned and killed but God raised from the dead.

and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, -- Peter recalls the betrayal that occurred during Christ's trial and execution, and his audience's implication in them, not many days earlier in Jerusalem. (Luke 23:1; Mark 15:7; Matthew 27:17; Matthew 20:19; Luke 23:18).

÷Acts 3:15
Acts 3:15

and you killed the Author [Prince] of life, -- "Prince" here is, α'ρχηγός *arche ̄gos ar-khay-gos'* (**G747**) meaning a *chief leader: - author, captain, prince.*

Some translating it "Author" emphasizing "*originator*," "*predecessor* or *pioneer*, c*ertain priority, both of time and of standing and prestige*." (cf. Psalms 36:9; Hebrews 2:10; Hebrews 12:2; 1 John 5:11, 1 John 5:20)

> "Prince" (NASB) or "author" (NIV) was used for founders and protectors of Greek cities, for heads of clans or military judges (Old Testament), or for commanders who lead the way; it was sometimes applied to Greek divine heroes such as Heracles. Here it may mean the leader who pioneered the way of (resurrection) life (contrast the murderer of Acts 3:14); one who forged on ahead of others to make the way for them to live as well.
>
> Luke's language employs irony (a frequent literary device): when the Jerusalemites accepted a murderer (Acts 3:14), they killed the "author of life." (IVPBBC NT)

whom God raised from the dead. -- Although in their rebellion the people had crucified the only one who could give them life, Jesus' resurrection declared God's truth about who He was.

To this we are witnesses. -- Not *"were"* but *"are"* as the apostles are still giving their testimony to the fact of the resurrection to that crowd. They are still bearing their testimony to us today through the holy scriptures. "We" is emphatic in the Greek.

÷Acts 3:16
Acts 3:16

And His name, -- The *name* of Jesus is here put for Jesus himself, and it is the same as saying "and *he*." In this way the word "name" is often used by the Hebrews, especially when speaking of God, Acts 4:12; Ephesians 1:21; Revelation 3:4. It does not mean that there was any efficacy in the mere *name* of Jesus that would heal the man, but that it was done by his authority and power.

through faith in His name, -- By means of faith in him; that is, by the faith which Peter and John had in Jesus. It does not refer to any faith that the man had himself, for there is no evidence that he believed in him.

But it was by means of the faith which the apostles exercised in him that the miracle was wrought, and was thus a fulfillment of the declaration in Matthew 17:20, "If ye have faith … ye shall say to this mountain, remove hence." This truth Peter repeats two or three times in the verse to impress it more distinctly on the minds of his hearers. (Barnes)

has made this man strong, whom you see and know. -- The question here is who had the faith in "His name"? Is it 1) the faith of Peter and John, or 2) the faith of the lame man?

1) **"**It ought to be clear that the faith which Peter is here speaking of is that which he and John have and not faith which the beggar had." (Lenski, p. 138). From events recorded in Luke 7:11-17, Matthew 17:14-21; and John 5:2-13 we see that faith was not a requirement on the part of the recipient of the miracle, but on the part of the one performing it. Acts 3:16.

2) On some occasion we see faith in others, Acts 14:9; Matthew 15:28.

Yes, the faith which *comes* through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. -- Peter repeats that it was through the power and authority of Christ that made this man well. The apostles had faith in Jesus; they had faith in his power, and that he would give them power to heal the man. (Acts 2:43).

Thus the Jewish worshipers should not wonder about the cause of the miracle. The power came through "faith in the name of Jesus." Peter's words drew attention to a risen Lord who continued to be spiritually active among believers.

"In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk," suggested to him the phraseology, "his name, through faith in his name, has made this man strong." But lest the audience might imagine that there was some charm in the mere name of Jesus, a mistake which was afterwards made by certain Jews in Ephesus, he adds, "The faith which is through him has given him this perfect soundness." The faith was not that of the cripple; for it is clear, from the description, that he had no faith. (McGarvy)

÷Acts 3:17
Acts 3:17

"Yet now, brethren, I know that you did *it* in ignorance, -- The Old Testament and Judaism regarded willful sin (Numbers 15:30-31) as far more heinous than sins of ignorance (Numbers 15:22-29), but both were sinful, and they also regarded ignorance of God's truth as sinful (e.g., Isaiah 1:3; Isaiah 29:11-12; Hosea 4:6).

This reflects Jesus' words from the cross (cf. Luke 23:34). However, even in their ignorance, the people were still spiritually responsible! In some ways this excuse was a way to help people accept their own responsibility (cf. Acts 13:27; Acts 17:30; Acts 26:9; 1 Corinthians 2:8).

as *did* also your rulers. -- Peter's claim that the leaders were wrong and in need of repentance will later draw their anger (Acts 4:1-2).

÷Acts 3:18
Acts 3:18

But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, -- Peter says by inspiration that ***"all"*** the prophets spoke with one ***"mouth"*** that the Messiah should suffer, while modern critics try to claim "none" did. Which testimony are we going to believe?

Peter has alluded primarily to Isaiah throughout his sermon (see Acts 3:14 and note; compare Psalms 22).

[Some MSS connect the pronoun ***his*** with the next clause. Read, *by the mouth of all the prophets that **his** Christ should suffer.* The purpose of this verse is to set forth the redemption of men through the suffering of Christ. So that from the first mention of the bruising of the heel of the seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15), there had been a constant chain of testimony that the Christ should suffer.]

that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. -- Isaiah 53:12 speaks of the suffering and death of the Messiah (the Suffering Servant) being in Yahweh's will. Peter is likely drawing on this passage, since he is still elaborating on his point in Acts 3:17 that the crucifixion of Jesus was ultimately in God's will—and that in Jesus even those who wrongly killed Him may find salvation.

:Acts 3:19
Acts 3:19

Repent therefore -- The call to repentance is always included in the gospel message. Acts emphasizes the essential place of repentance in embracing salvation offered by Christ, See Acts 2:38.

The word "repent" means to change of one's mind that results in a change of action. In such a context as this it carries the idea to turn away from sin, change one's way of living, and live God's way.

[It however does not mean to be "sorry for one's sins." The word repent occurs forty-six times in the Old Testament. Thirty-seven of these times, God is the one repenting (or not repenting). If repentance meant sorrow for sin, God would be a sinner. It means a change of one's mind (or heart) that changes the course of one's actions.]

and be converted, -- Literally, "*turn again*". The same word is well rendered (Acts 11:21), "*a great number believed and **turned** unto the Lord.*" "Converted" is a frequent NT word that relates to sinners turning to God in obedience. (Acts 9:35; Acts 14:15; Acts 26:18-20; Luke 1:16-17; 1 Peter 2:25).

This verse is parallel to Acts 2:38.
Acts 3:19 Repent... be converted... sins blotted out ..
Acts 2:38 Repent... be baptized ... forgiveness of sins

that your sins may be blotted out, [wiped out] -- The results of such obedience to God is one's sins are "wiped out," (ἐξαλειφθ ναι, *exaleiphô* **G1813***).* This is the picture of someone taking a sponge and wiping across the debit sheet to blot out the debt one owed. (Psalms 51:9; Isaiah 43:25)

The clause with εἰς τό states that the purpose of being "converted" is, "for the blotting out of your sins;" the passive voice denoting God as the one that blots out the sins.

so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, -- [Some Translations put this phrase in the next verse. NASB; RSV; NIV]

The word "refreshing" is from the Greek word *anapsyxis*, **G403,** and refers to rejuvenation, Those who repent will be like a renewed man, starting over in his spiritual life, "born again." It is pictured in Romans 6:4 after baptism one is raised to *walk in newness of life*. See John 3:3; John 3:5; see 2 Corinthians 5:17.

:Acts 3:20
Acts 3:20

so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, -- [Some Translations put this phrase at the end of verse 19.]

The word "refreshing" is from the Greek word *anapsyxis*, **G403,** and refers to rejuvenation, Those who repent will be like a renewed man, starting over in his spiritual life, "born again." It is pictured in Romans 6:4 after baptism one is raised to *walk in newness of life*. See John 3:3; John 3:5; see 2 Corinthians 5:17.

and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was appointed [preached] to you before, -- This is speaking of Jesus' incarnation; the Son of God came as a man, sent by God to do the will of the Father. His coming had been preached by the holy prophets long ago (Acts 3:21).

Some translations translate the word *prokerusso* "proclaimed before" meaning Jesus was *appointed* by God to be the Christ. This speaks of Christ' first coming, because heaven has received Him until He comes back (Acts 3:21).

:Acts 3:21
Acts 3:21

whom heaven must receive -- Peter is here referring to the Lord's ascension back to heaven which had been witnessed by all the apostles. (Acts 1:9)

The word **"receive" is δέξασθαι**, G1209, and indicates that Peter and the rest could bear witness that He has gone into heaven, His work on earth being finished. - (CBSC)

Another translation of this is, "whom heaven must ***retain*** until the times of the restoration of all things of which God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (McGarvey). The prophecies were those mentioned by Zacharias in **Luke 1:70**; Jesus in Luke 24:27; Luke 24:44; and such predictions as **Psalms 111:9; Jeremiah 31:31-33; Jeremiah 30:10; Daniel 2:44.; Isaiah 2:2-3;. etc.**

until the times of restoration of all things, -- With the word "until" Peter links the first coming of Christ to His second coming. The key word here is "until," which says heaven has received Christ "until"-- How is this word used? "Chiliasts overlook the fact that Peter places the refreshing seasons ahead of the sending of Jesus for his great return (Acts 1:11)." - (Lenski)

Here are two crucial points from the context itself. **1)** In the chronology of the passage, the second coming of Christ occurs after the "restoration," not before it. **2)** The apostle specifically parallels the "times of the restoration of all things" (v.21) with "these days," i.e., the Christian age (v.24). (W. Jackson). Note the phraseology:

The prophets spoke of the *restoration of all things* (v.21)

The prophets spoke of *these days* (v.24)

1) Christ is in heaven at the right hand of God "until" the restoration of all things, meaning that the kingdom of God has been restored and the King is ruling in heaven, and the saints are citizens in this Kingdom, and living God-like lives; **2)** or as Chiliast would say; He is in heaven "until" he then comes back to make restoration of all things. (This indicates a belief that in His first coming He failed to complete His mission.)

The word "restoration" is ἀποκαταστ σεως, **G600** and is a double compound word composed of "*apo*," "*kata*," and "*histemi*," and is only used here in the New Testament; it seems to be a technical medical term, and means complete restoration to health. To Peter's Jewish audience, the "restoration of all things" was *messianic* terminology. When the Messiah came, He would make all things right.

Christ gave the commission that the Gospel be preached to the whole world. This Gospel will restore God's moral law every where it is preached and practiced. (Matthew 28:19-20). The church is the community/family/kingdom of God on earth today. When men accept Christ as the Lord and King of their lives, the restoration of God's plan for mankind is in effect. This coming of Christ to put the Gospel into effect and create this spiritual Kingdom of God on earth today is what all the prophets were foretelling.

It is this writer's view that when the Lord's Kingdom on earth today is threatened severely by the world doing Satan's bidding that Christ will come to bring a final judgment upon all evil and deliver His saints to heaven to be with Him. (1 Thessalonians 4:13 ff; Revelation 20 especially Revelation 20:8-11; 2 Peter 2:9;)

which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. -- The Christ that will return is the same one preached (prophesied about) before in the Scriptures by the holy prophets. He came, was rejected and crucified by the people in Peter's audience. But Peter proclaims that He is coming back. (Zerr). "Thus Christ rules from heaven in glory "until the times of the restoration of all things," those times (ν = χρόνων) of which all the prophets of old have spoken." - Lenski.

Peter limited the "restoration of all things" to the things **God** actually **spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.**

÷Acts 3:22
Acts 3:22

Moses said, -- Moses is identified as one of the "holy prophets" who was a spokesman for God, Acts 3:21. Peter speaks of the prophets from Samuel and those who came after him, Acts 3:24. Luke will also refers to Abraham in Acts 3:25.

'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. -- Peter quotes Moses from Deuteronomy 18:15 ff. The title "The Prophet" was used of the coming Messiah, Deuteronomy 18:14-22, and was well known by Peter's hearers, esp Deuteronomy 18:15-18; John 1:21-25.

You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. -- This documentation of Jesus from the Law of Moses was very important to Peter's Jewish hearers. It was from the most honored part of the OT canon for all Jews, both Sadducees and Pharisees.

Peter is now asserting from Deuteronomy 18:15 (ff.) that Christ is now the law-giver and the mediator of the new covenant as Moses was of that given at Mt. Sinai Hebrews 8:6; Hebrews 9:15; Hebrews 12:24; and we are to hear Him Matthew 17:5.

God had authenticated Jesus as "The Prophet" like Moses by mighty miracles and wonders as Moses had before Pharaoh and the people. John 6:14; John 5:46-47; John 7:40; Matthew 21:11. (The Samaritans looked for Him as well, Luke 17:16.)

÷Acts 3:23
Acts 3:23

And it shall be that every soul -- Peter continues the quote from Moses who stressed the people's accountability to hear and obey "The Prophet."

who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.' -- The Greek ἐξολοθρεύω ("utterly destroyed") occurs frequently in the Septuagint for the Hebrew phrase, "cut off from his people" (Genesis 17:14). Peter here uses it to mark the extreme gravity of rejecting Christ as "The Prophet." (John 3:18; John 7:40; Matthew 21:11.)

÷Acts 3:24
Acts 3:24

And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, -- Samuel and those prophets who followed seem to refer to those whom the Jews called "the former prophets," the authors of the historical books. The first phrase, "All the prophets," therefore, comprehends all the prophets to whom the Lord Himself appealed in Luke 24:27, and Luke 24:44.

also proclaimed these days. -- All the prophets spoke of "these days." "These days" therefore refer back to what Peter said of Joel's prophecy, Joel 2:28-31, which was beginning to be fulfilled in the presence of the Jews that day at Pentecost (See the note at Acts 2:16).

The phrase "these days" then is synonymous with "the time for restoring (restoration)" in Acts 3:21. This reference confirms that Christ is in heaven at the right hand of God in fulfillment of what was spoken by Moses; "the Prophet" had come and they had refused to listen to him! Moses had warned them!

The "restoration" was not a temporal kingdom, but a spiritual kingdom, the church, as the chosen family of God. (1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6).

÷Acts 3:25
Acts 3:25

You are the sons of the prophets -- This is idiomatic language of the idea that they were the disciples, pupils, followers of the teachings of the prophets. Peter stresses the privileged position of

Israel to receive the word of God from His prophets. Haveing had God's word delivered to them, the people had no excuse for their behavior.

and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, -- Peter addresses these Jews as the children of Abraham, the covenant people. However, these covenant people must respond in repentance and obedience to Christ's message or they will be rejected (Acts 3:23)!

saying to Abraham, 'And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' -- This is quoted from Genesis 22:18 and Genesis 26:4. Christ was the ultimate fulfillment of this "blessed" promise.

The Greek word used here, *sperma*, often translated "seed" or "offspring," can refer to a singular descendant (as to Christ) or to someone's descendants as a collective whole. (See Galatians 3:16.)

÷Acts 3:26
Acts 3:26

God, having raised up his servant, -- Peter may be proclaiming the resurrection of Christ. The deed done in Jesus' name upon the lame man showed the power of the resurrection. Acts 3:6; Acts 3:12-13. (See note at Acts 2:24)

But more likely in this context Peter is calling Jesus, God's servant, as the one "**raised up**" to be the fulfillment of the promised made by Moses (Acts 3:22)

sent him to you first, -- First to the Jews, because of their Covenant heritage, they have the first opportunity to hear and understand the message of the gospel (cf. Romans 1:16; Romans 9:5). However, they must respond in the same way as everyone else: by faith in Christ, repentance from sins, and baptism as commanded, and continued faithfulness. (Galatians 6:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:13; Hebrews 12:3)

to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness." -- Salvation involves a change of mind about sin with a resulting change of actions and priorities. (cf. Acts 17:30-31.)

÷Acts 4:1
Acts 4:1

And as they were speaking to the people, -- Peter and John were explaining that the lame man had been healed in the name of (by the authority of) Jesus.

the priests -- These were probably the priests on duty and in charge of the Temple services. They had probably taken offence at the multitudes assembled in the Temple court.

The priests were divided into into twenty-four courses, each of which was to serve in the Temple for a week, see 1 Chronicles 24:1-19; 2 Chronicles 23:8. It was during such service in the order of his course, that the promise of the birth of John the Baptist was made to Zechariah the priest (Luke 1:5-8).

and the captain of the temple -- There is mentioned in the OT an officer whose title is "the ruler [chief officer] of the house of God" (1 Chronicles 9:11; 2 Chronicles 31:13; Nehemiah 11:11). He was not a military officer, but had charge of the guard of priests and Levites who watched the Temple at night.

and the Sad'ducees -- The Sadducees were the prominent sect at this time enjoying the favor of the Romans and having the Chief Priest selected from their leadership. Acts 23:8.

came upon them, -- Meaning, they came to arrest the two men. The same word is used of the action of the chief captain in Acts 23:27 when he tells how he *came upon* Paul when he was being beaten by the Jews.

÷Acts 4:2
Acts 4:2

greatly annoyed -- Grieved, KJV; "disturbed;" "greatly disturbed" NASB; "angry" NET; "upset" "annoyed:"

Perhaps it would be better translated, *being troubled*. The word signifies *thoroughly pained*. It is used (Acts 16:18) of Paul's feeling when the "damsel possessed with a spirit of divination" cried after him at Philippi.

because they were teaching the people -- The religious leaders were not only disturbed by the apostles' teaching, but likely offended that they were instructing the people in the first place. The priests and Sadducees, along with the Pharisees and scribes, typically occupied the role of teachers, and the apostles have usurped that status, with great success.

and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. -- The preaching of resurrection in Jesus threatens the religious leaders because it asserts His vindication by God for His teaching and claims.

Jesus' resurrection shows condemnation for Jewish leaders rejecting Him and putting Him to death.

The Sadducees, in particular, did not believe in a real, physical resurrection (Luke 20:27; Acts 23:8). They objected to the apostles' teaching that Jesus arose from the dead and its implication that His death and resurrection are the firstfruits of a resurrection to everlasting life for all who believe in Him (compare 1 Corinthians 15:20-23; Daniel 12:1-4).

They had executed Christ as a blasphemer and now Peter and John were proclaiming His resurrection.

÷Acts 4:3
Acts 4:3

And they arrested them -- The "them" would be Peter and John and apparently even the healed lame man, Acts 4:14.

and put them in custody -- "Custody" is a word meaning *ward*, a place for safe keeping. This *ward* was apparently some other place then the "public jail", Acts 5:18. Imprisonment was not a

usual mode of punishment with the Jews, it was only a temporary thing till the punishment proscribed by the Law was inflicted.

Civil authorities who are mentioned as using it for punishment are not Jewish.

until the next day, for it was already evening. -- The Jews were not allowed to give judgment in the night, and any court hearing ceased with the twelfth hour (6 p.m.). It was already about the ninth hour when Peter and John were going up to the Temple (Acts 3:1), so that after Peter's address to the people and the arrest of him and John was completed it would be too late to enter on a judicial enquiry. (Peter must have preach two or three hours!) The Rabbis founded the prohibition on Jeremiah 21:12, "O house of David, thus saith the Lord, Execute judgment *in the morning*."

It is interesting to note that the court bent their own law with the arrest and arranging false testimony against Jesus at night time. (John 18:3; Mark 14:54-55; Mark 14:72; Mark 15:1; Luke 22:66).

:Acts 4:4
Acts 4:4

But many of those who had heard the word believed, -- In contrast to the opposition from the Jewish leaders, many of them that heard the sermon became believers. Here is another example of the teaching of Romans 10:17, that "faith comes by hearing."

The term "believed" often stands for the total process of coming to trust in Jesus as the Savior and committing themselves to following his teaching.

and the number of the men came to about five thousand. -- This cumulative total of men in the Jerusalem church builds on previous statements of extraordinary growth, Acts 1:15; Acts 2:41.

The term "men" (G435) is probably used here loosely for both men and women, or simply, "disciples," or "believers." Some, however, believe that this number is strictly males, and does not include women and children.

The point is that the preaching of Peter and the apostles is being successful in reaching multitudes.

:Acts 4:5
Acts 4:5

On the morrow -- The next day, during the day-time, when the investigation was permitted to be held.

their rulers and elders and scribes -- These positions made up the Jewish ruling body, the Sanhedrin. (*see notes on* Acts 4:15; Acts 5:21; and Acts 22:5.).

This body (the Sanhedrin) is referred to as the "council" in Acts 5:21 and the "senate of the people of Israel", and in Acts 22:5 as the "whole council of elders."

In NT time it was the highest political/religious body which Rome allowed within Judaism.

It is usually identified in the NT by the phrase, "the scribes, elders and high priest" or "rulers" (cf. Luke 23:13; Acts 3:17; Acts 4:5; Acts 4:8; Acts 13:27).

were gathered together in Jerusalem, -- Jerusalem was the usual place where the Sanhedrin assembled. But on account of the increase of violence the Sanhedrin now moved from place to

place and held court. The declaration that they were now in Jerusalem is Luke's corroboration of the fact that they moved the location of the court from time to time.

÷Acts 4:6
Acts 4:6

with Annas the high priest and Ca'iaphas and John and Alexander, -- See John 18:13. It is by no means certain that **Annas** was at that time the high priest, but he had been, and doubtless retained the title. He was father-in-law to **Caiaphas**, who was now exercising the office of the high priest; and from this fact, together with his former dignity, Annas is mentioned first.

John -- This is the same name as Johanan, and Lightfoot concludes that this person was the famous Johanan ben Zaccai, who by his influence with Vespasian procured permission for many of the Jews to settle in Jamnia (Yavneh) after the destruction of their city, and himself became head of the synagogue there. - CBSC

The *Pulpit Commentary* says "Of **John** and **Alexander** nothing further is known, but Farrar conjectures that John may be "the celebrated Johanan Ben Zakkai, and Alexander perhaps the wealthy brother of Philo" ("Life of St. Paul," 1. p. 107).

Alexander -- Some commentators have expressed belief there is evidence that this Alexander is the brother of Philo, who was a religious leader in the city of Alexandria, Egypt. (See Eusebius, Prep. Evang. 8:13; and Ecclesiastes 2:17.)

Alexander.— This name has been identified by many scholars with Alexander, the brother of Philo, the *Alabarch,* or magistrate of Alexandria (Jos. *Ant.* xviii. 8, § 1; xix. 5, § 1). There is, however, not the shadow of any evidence for the identification. - Ellicott

and all who were of the high-priestly family. -- The Sadducees were the pro-Roman sect and controlled the high-priestly offices. They did so until the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, and after that the Pharisee contolled the leadership among the Jewish people.

÷Acts 4:7
Acts 4:7

And when they had set them -- The Sanhedrin set the three of them, Peter, John, and the healed man, in the middle of the room before them.

in the midst [center] , --- The members of the Sanhedrin sat in a semicircle on a raised platform. As the two apostles face the court, they may have remembered Jesus words to them in Matthew 10:17-20.

they inquired, -- The council questions Peter and John (the son of Zebedee) about how they were able to perform the miracle (Acts 3:1-10). They began the inquisition with their questions.

"By what power -- This means "what kind" of power was this miracle worked? These leaders of the Sanhedrin do not question the reality of the healing; the evidence is apparently beyond dispute. They assume, however, that the miracle is not done on the basis of power from the one true God. It

was common in the Greco-Roman world to call on various deities, helper spirits, and magical names and symbols to effect healing.

or by [in] what name -- They insinuated that the healing was done by magical power (cf. Acts 19:13). They probably wanted to attributed the deed to Beelzebub or some magic, and not allow Jesus' name to be attached to the deed. (Luke 11:15; Acts 13:6 etc.) They tried this same trick on Jesus (cf. Luke 11:14-15; Mark 3:22). They could not deny the miracles so they attempted to impugn the method or source of the power.

did you do this?" -- In the Greek there is an emphasis upon the "you," (plural) which is placed last, equal to "such as you," unlearned and contemptible men.

:Acts 4:8
Acts 4:8

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, -- Peter is empowered by the Holy Spirit to give answer to their questions. This is in fulfillment of what Jesus promised in Matthew 10:19-20.

Under the direction of the Spirit Peter faces their persecution and delivers his message with power and boldness (Acts 4:13). Remember, this was the man who only a few weeks earlier had denied the Lord three times out of fear.

said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, -- Peter respectfully addressed the court. This was the highest judicial tribunal which the Jews had. See note on Acts 4:5 for the makeup of this body.

:Acts 4:9
Acts 4:9

if we are being examined today -- The word "examined" here is *anakrino (G350)* and denotes an official judicial proceeding.

concerning a good deed done -- Peter's point is that trials are convened for crimes, not for acts of mercy and love.

to a cripple, -- Peter asserts the inappropriateness of an official trial concerning a wonderful miracle of healing and mercy. They should be praising God instead!

by what means -- "Do you want to know how he was healed?" (NLT). What, or how, was this done?

this man has been healed [made well], -- The word indicates the complete health and restoration of his handicap man.

:Acts 4:10
Acts 4:10

be it known to you all, -- Peter wants to make the source of the power healing this man very clear to this court. He doesn't want them to come to a wrong conclusion, but to know the truth.

and to all the people of Israel, -- There were probably spectators in the courtroom; perhaps some who had witnessed the miracle and wanted to see what the court did to these men. Peter wanted the entire city to know about the miracle and the power behind its performance.

that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, -- Referring to a person's name was shorthand for their character and reputation.

In the middle east a person's "name" implies, any authority, character, rank, majesty, power, excellence, etc., and everything that the person IS.

Concerning "Nazareth" see note at Acts 3:6 .

Peter is affirming that "Jesus of Nazareth" was none other than the "Messiah" (Christ) who was predicted in their Scriptures. And it was by the authority (power) of the Messiah Jesus that this man was healed.

whom you crucified, -- Peter turns the trial back on his judges, accusing them of the crime of putting to death the Messiah (Luke 22:52). They instigated His death, and Peter asserts their guilt.

whom God raised from the dead, -- God, the ultimate authority, raised the Messiah whom the council rejected--"Jesus." The religious leaders have dramatically misunderstood both the true identity and mission of Jesus the Christ.

Jesus' resurrection confirms God's approval of all the Jesus taught and did.

by him this man is standing before you well. -- This is a word play on "stands," (we don't know whether Peter intended it or not) but here the lame man stands up and stands before the court as evidence to the authority and power of Jesus Christ of Nazareth!

This man is himself "Exhibit A" for the defense.

÷Acts 4:11
Acts 4:11

This -- "Jesus" whom you (Jewish rulers) crucified, but God raised from the grave.

is the stone -- See the note at 1 Peter 2:7, about the importance of the stone "rejected."

which was rejected by you [the] builders, -- The council are correctly called the builders, for on them depended the whole religious and civil government of the people. Peter, empowered by the Spirit, applies the Scriptures spoken by the Psalmist (Psalms 118:22) prophetically of Christ.

Jesus had already (Matthew 21:42) applied these words to Himself and to the way in which He was being rejected of the Jews, in the close of one of His parables which the Pharisees felt had been spoken against them. This metaphor is picked up again by Peter (1 Peter 2:4) and Paul (Romans 9:32-33; Ephesians 2:20).

[There are three kinds of stones used in the building metaphor: there is the "cornerstone" (the foundation stone), the "keystone," (the lintel over a door), and the "capstone" that may bear the name (and date?) of the builder.

but which has become the head of the corner. -- This construction metaphor spoke of a foundation stone, which was placed first and set the angles for the rest of the building, called "the cornerstone". In real life they were often very large stones. [The largest stone visible within in the

Western Wall of the Temple complex is 44.5 ft. long, 11 ft high, and the width (or thickness) is hidden within the wall, and weights 570 tons.]

Christ was that "stone" which was at first rejected by the builders, but later realized to be the most important stone in the building!

÷Acts 4:12
Acts 4:12

And there is salvation -- "Salvation" refers to the forgiveness of sins and deliverance from God's wrath and to enjoyment of His favor in heaven.

in no one else, -- Salvation is found in Christ alone. No other prophet, teacher, individual or body of men, can do for man what Christ has done and can do. (John 6:68; 1 Corinthians 2:2; 1 Corinthians 3:11.)

for there is no other name under heaven -- There is no power, divine or demonic; none but the Living God, our Creator of all. Genesis 1:1-2; John 1:3-4; Hebrews 1:3; Colossians 1:15-19.

given among men by which we must be saved." -- A man must embrace the message of His death and resurrection done for the forgiveness of their sins. Man must then commit himself to obeying Christ as his Lord in all that He says. (Hebrews 5:9; Matthew 7:21).

÷Acts 4:13
Acts 4:13

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, -- The apostles had unshakeable confidence in speaking the truth, despite the undoubtedly intimidating circumstances.

and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, -- This does not imply they thought Peter and John were ignorant, but that they lacked formal training in the rabbinical shcools and the law of Moses.

they wondered; -- NASB " observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed."

Luke uses this word often (18 times in Luke and Acts); it usually, but not always, has a positive connotation (cf. Luke 11:38; Luke 20:26; Acts 4:13; Acts 13:41).

and they recognized that they had been with Jesus. -- Their bold, powerful words revealed to the Sanhedrin their association with Jesus. This is the only explanation for the apostles' unexpected eloquence and effective speech.

"Have You Been With Jesus?"

These disciples reflected Jesus in their lives. It could be seen by their:

1. Compassion - Acts 3:4; Acts 3:7; Acts 3:2
   -Personal compassion for the individual
   -Practical compassion - didn't substitute silver for sympathy

-Powerful compassion - Acts 3:16

2. Conviction - Acts 4:1-3; Acts 4:10
-Notice what they were preaching
-The cross and empty tomb was "disturbing" to Sadducees

3. Courage - Acts 4:13
-They didn't bow to public opinion - Acts 4:12
-They didn't bow to powerful opposition - Acts 4:5-6
-They didn't bow to private oppression - Acts 4:15-18

4. Commitment - Acts 4:10
-Committed personally - lock, stock, and barrel
-Committed to preaching the word - Acts 4:20

Conclusion: Considered uneducated and untrained they were powerful living examples of Christ's disciples.

÷Acts 4:14
Acts 4:14

But seeing the man that had been healed standing beside them, -- The man is "Exhibit A" for the defense. Everyone knew this lame man because he regularly sat at the Temple door daily. But he was not sitting anymore! The crowd in the Temple could not deny this (cf. Acts 4:16; Acts 4:22).

they had nothing to say in opposition. -- The religious leaders could not deny the reality of the man standing--for the first day in his life--right in front of them (Acts 3:1-10). They would, however, continue to deny the authority of Jesus.

In light of such evidence it may be that some of the judges considered it could be God's working, (cf. Nicodemus, John 3:1-2; John 7:50; Joseph of Arimathaea, Mark 15:43; John 19:38; Gamaliel, Acts 5:34; Acts 5:39).

÷Acts 4:15
Acts 4:15

But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, -- They asked the three of them to leave while they discussed their options and planned their strategy of denial and deception (cf. Acts 4:17-18).

they conferred with one another, -- It would be risky to punish the two apostles when they had broken no laws and had performed a miracle that captured the entire city's attention. But the Sanhedrin believed it had to stop the preaching of the incriminating truth that its members had executed the Messiah.

Just how Luke knew what went on among the members of the Sanhedrin in closed session has often been debated, though we cannot know for sure. Perhaps Saul (Paul) was a member of

the council at that time and he later told Luke. Or maybe Paul heard the gist of the discussion from his teacher Gamaliel and then told it to Luke. Or there may have been secret sympathizers of the apostles in the council who "leaked" to them what was said and from whom Luke picked it up. - EBC

÷Acts 4:16
Acts 4:16

saying, "What shall we do with these men? -- The council is in a dilemma. Any action they take will have unfavorable consequences for the Council.

For that a notable sign has been performed through them is manifest to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, -- It was without question the lame man had been healed. Too many people had witnessed the effect of this miracle Acts 3:9. The news must have filled the city very quickly.

This admission, in their secret deliberations, shows the utter heartlessness and hypocrisy of their proceedings.

and we cannot deny it. -- But, neither would they accept the truth regarding Jesus!

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We cannot deny it --

How Can Christ Be Manifested In Our Lives?
1. We must practice what we preach - Acts 4:13-16
1) Let Jesus be seen in our a) boldness; b) doing good
2) Let people know the power of this life - Acts 4:7
2. We must see popularity as unimportant - Acts 4:19
3. We must learn how to handle adversity - see note Acts 4:23
4. We must believe in praying and preaching - see note Acts 4:29
5. We must see that possessions do not matter -see note Acts 4:32

÷Acts 4:17
Acts 4:17

But in order that it may spread no further among the people, -- This reveals that the chief concern was to keep the message's reach and influence from growing.

The Council seems to understand the message of Jesus was a threat to their own power and prestige.

let us warn them to speak no more to any one in this name." -- This was their plan! Stop talking about Jesus and stop helping people "in His name!"

Notice the Sanhedrin didn't forbid miracles, but *teaching* Acts 4:18. They realized the preaching of Jesus and miracles went together.

÷Acts 4:18
Acts 4:18

So they called them -- The apostles were summoned back into the formal Council meeting.

and charged [commanded] them -- The Sanhedrin decided to impose a ban on the apostles, both to warn them and to provide a legal basis for further action should such be needed (cf. Acts 5:28).

not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. -- The Council warned the men to seal their lips and never let the name of Jesus come of their mouth either in personal conversation or in public teaching.

It was important to the Council to try and get the people to forget everything about "the name of Jesus."

÷Acts 4:19
Acts 4:19

But Peter and John answered them, -- The council had before it men whose lives had been transformed by association with Jesus. They had been witnesses of Jesus' earthly ministry and resurrection (cf. Acts 10:39-41) and had been commanded by their risen Lord to proclaim His name to the people (cf. Acts 1:8; Acts 10:42).

We are reminded that John has not abandoned Peter, for it seems that he too took his turn speaking, cf. Acts 4:13.

"Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; -- Here Peter reminds the court that there is a higher authority than theirs. Christians should obey governmental authority (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17), but when government decrees are clearly contrary to God's Word, God must be obeyed (cf. Exodus 1:15-17; Daniel 6:4-10).

÷Acts 4:20
Acts 4:20

for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." -- The apostles, as eyewitnesses to Jesus, must act as faithful witnesses according to Jesus' command (Acts 1:8).

÷Acts 4:21
Acts 4:21

And when they had further threatened them, -- This was all they could do; the multitude knew that the lame man had been healed, for he was standing there. The apostles could not be punished "for a good deed."

The seriousness of the decree must not be underestimated, as any future preaching became an act of defiance against the supreme Jewish tribunal.

These were not idle threats. Later, the apostles were arrested and beaten (Acts 5:17-40); and still later, Stephen was stoned to death for preaching the gospel (Acts 6:8–7:60). For the moment, the popularity of the apostles with the people prevented anything but threats.

they let them go, finding no way [basis] to punish them, -- The apostles have violated no law, and the religious leaders have no legal grounds for disciplining them.

Christianity was not a threat to Rome or the peace of Jerusalem. Even the Sanhedrin could find no grounds to condemn its leaders. This may indicate one of Luke's purposes in writing.

because [on account] of the people; -- The contrast between the crowd worshipping God and the leaders focused on threatening the apostles shows the leaders' spiritual rebellion against God.

for all men praised God for what had happened. -- The eyewitnesses of the recent events in Jerusalem held the early church in high esteem (cf. Acts 2:47). The Jewish leaders were threatened by this popularity (cf. Acts 5:13; Acts 5:26).

÷Acts 4:22
Acts 4:22

For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old. -- The man being of age to give a reputable testimony himself, cf. John 9:19-22.

For a physician like Luke, this point would be most noticeable. By this age the man's unused limbs would have shrunk and withered and become disproportionate to the frame of his body.

In the physician's description he used two unique words (βάσεις G939 and σφυρά G4974) which are used (Acts 3:7) to describe the cure of the cripple.

this sign -- There is another perspective to this healing: it is **a sign**. It served to give credential value to the speakers, and demonstrate that God is involved in this matter.

÷Acts 4:23
Acts 4:23

When they were released they went to their friends -- Their "friends" (companions) here seem to be the other apostles.

Perhaps they were still abiding in the upper room which they had occupied before Pentecost. Because Peter on a later occasion (Acts 12:12) made his way, after his deliverance from prison, to the house of Mary the mother of John Mark where many were gathered together praying. Some have thought that this was the house where the apostles had dwelt from the first.

and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. -- They report the threats and warning that were issued to them.

From verses 23-24, We must learn how to handle adversity
1) Fellowship; 2) Prayer

Sermon: A Church like That
1) worshipping - Acts 4:24 a, Acts 4:31
2) working - Acts 4:32, Acts 4:34-35
3) winning - Acts 4:33; Acts 5:12, Acts 5:14.

÷Acts 4:24
Acts 4:24

And when they heard it, -- When they heard of the threat, they do not flee the city, but pray.

they lifted their voices together [with one accord] to God -- The phrase "lifted their voices" could refer to singing (and they may have sung the Psalm in the prayer) but the phrase here refers to prayer. The Christians were unified not only in their prayer, but in their mindset, desires, and mission.

and said, "Sovereign Lord, -- The Greek word is an uncommon NT title for God that means "*absolute master*" or one who is in *full control*. (Luke 2:29; 2 Timothy 2:21; Revelation 6:10), which represented the disciples' recognition of God's sovereignty, or *complete authority*.

It is worth notice that Peter (2 Peter 2:1) and Jude (Jude 1:4) apply it to Jesus.

It is the word used by slaves in referring to their Master, slaves who are totally subjected to the Lord of their domain.

who didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, -- Because God reigns over all creation, He is the only one able to answer His people's prayers and preserve them in the midst of danger. Cf. Genesis 1:1; 2 Kings 19:15; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalms 146:6; Acts 17:24.

÷Acts 4:25
Acts 4:25

who by the mouth of our father David, thy servant, -- The use of Psalms 2 acknowledges that the world will oppose the plan of God and the Messiah. Its original context declares the coronation of God's Son as the ultimate descendant of David (Psalms 2:7).

didst say by the Holy Spirit, -- Plainly taught here is the fact that the early disciples regarded the Psalms as inspired; and, to them, inspiration was the impartation of the Holy Spirit which endowed the author of Scripture. Thus his words were true and accurate and his commands authoritative.

The apostles now proceed to apply the words of the second Psalm, which has been admitted by the Jews themselves to be Messianic, to the circumstances under which Christ was put to death.

The words of the Psalm are quoted from the Septuagint.

'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples imagine vain things? -- The Greek word for ***rage (ephruaxan)*** means "to neigh, stomp the ground like a fierce untamed horse. Here it seems to imply arrogance as well.

The people, that is *worldly*, "imagine vain things": to be anxious over *empty* things; to focus one's life, time and energy upon *meaningless* possessions and *material things*, he empty, unsatisfying things of the world.

Those in authority who set themselves against Jesus and His Church feel their power threatened and respond in fierce opposition.

÷Acts 4:26
Acts 4:26

The kings of the earth set themselves in array, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed' -- The Psalmist envisioned the political entities of the world, the "kings" and "rulers," uniting against Yahweh and His anointed one (the Messiah, or the Christ), who bears His name and is anointed King.

The "kings" are Herod and Pilate, as the next verse indicates.

set themselves in array -- These words imply to be arrayed for battle, but can mean to "show themselves," "to be ready," or "to stand." They took their stand and the battle lines against the Lord Jesus.

The prophecy was fulfilled in the death of Christ. Men stood against God's "holy child Jesus" (or "servant Jesus"); they gathered together against Him and killed Him.

The Psalm in its first application probably referred to some revolt against the king of Israel. We have such a revolt mentioned in David's reign (2 Samuel 8), where the Syrians, Moabites, Ammonites and other nations were conquered by David, after rebelling in vain. (CBSC)

÷Acts 4:27
Acts 4:27

for truly in this city -- The Apostles in prayer declare they see in what happened at Jerusalem the fulfillment of Psalm two.

there were gathered together -- Enemies of Truth worked together against God's anointed.

against thy holy servant Jesus, -- Some may translate the phrase "God's holy child Jesus" but here it probably means "servant." (Acts 3:13).

whom thou didst anoint, -- Jesus is the anointed one; called in the Hebrew "Messiah" and in Greek "Christ."

both Herod and Pontius Pilate, -- Of the several Herods who appear in the pages of the N.T., this is Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. Luke is the only Gospel writer who records the part taken by Herod in conjunction with Pilate in the condemnation of Jesus. (Luke 23:1-12)

with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, -- The Romans and Jewish leaders together were responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus.

÷Acts 4:28
Acts 4:28

to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. -- "To do" is to be taken with the verb "gathered together," and not with "predestined."

"Purpose" speaks of the plan God made back in eternity for man's redemption. That plan involved the Son of God being the perfect sacrifice for man's sin.

predestined to occur -- "To occur" (*ginesthai*) is a different verb than the one translated "to do" (*poiesai*). The later speaks of man's agency, the former of God's providence. The Gentiles and Jews, the government and religious officials, who took part in His crucifixion were acting of their own free will, yet they were doing just as God had planned what would happen.

÷Acts 4:29
Acts 4:29

And now, Lord, look upon [take note] their threats, -- 'Lord, in view of their threats, look upon us,' to help us stand and boldly continue our work.

and grant to thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness, -- The apostles are praying for courage to go ahead and preach the Gospel in spite of official opposition.

This is a good example of us. When we are harassed or persecuted for righteousness' sake, we should pray and stay steady doing our duty.

We must believe in praying and preaching - Acts 4:24; Acts 4:29
a) Gospel preaching is edifying - Acts 4:32
b) Gospel preaching is evangelistic - Acts 5:14

÷Acts 4:30
Acts 4:30

while you stretch out your hand to heal, -- The apostles are asking for boldness to continue preaching and for God to continue to work miracles through them.

In the OT the phrase "your hand" refers to God's strength and ability to accomplish His purposes--especially to save (Deuteronomy 4:34; Deuteronomy 5:15; Psalms 44:3; Isaiah 62:8).

The apostles expressed confidence that God will continue to uphold them and bless them as they carry out the mission He has given them.

and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." -- The miracles would furnish evidence to the people that God was with them confirming the truth of the message they were delivering. Acts 2:22.

Here we have the same words as in Acts 4:27, which could read "your holy **Servant [child]** Jesus."

÷Acts 4:31
Acts 4:31

And when they had prayed, -- Just as Luke only gives us an outline of the Peter's sermons, this is probably only a few words of their prayer. Whether they prayed in unison, or each in leading a part, or giving "Amens" together we don't know. Some have suggested they might have even sung the Psalm together.

the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; -- The word "shaken" is used of an earthquake. God provided a physical demonstration that He heard their prayer, even as they had prayed in recognition of Him as Creator, Acts 4:24.

The OT frequently describes shaking or earthquakes as a sign of God's presence (e.g., Exodus 19:18; Psalms 114:1-7; Isaiah 6:4).

and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit -- The apostles had been baptized in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) and this doesn't mean they had to be "baptized" again. The expression "filled with Holy Spirit" simply means that the Holy Spirit enabled them to continue with the mission the Lord had given them. (cf. Acts 2:4; Acts 4:8, Acts 4:31; Acts 9:17; Acts 13:9, Acts 13:52).

and spoke the word of God with boldness. -- Wherever they found occasion and opportunity they shared the Word of God, neglecting the council's threat, with the boldness for which they had prayed.

Oh, To Be A Church Like That!
1) A Worshipping Church - Acts 4:24; Acts 4:31
2) A Working Church - Acts 4:32; Acts 4:34-35
3) A Winning Church - Acts 4:33; Acts 5:12; Acts 5:14

÷Acts 4:32
Acts 4:32

Now the company of those who believed -- The community of Christians, those who made up the church there in Jerusalem.

were of one heart and soul, -- This is a Hebrew form of expressing complete unity. Thus (1 Chronicles 12:38) "all the rest of Israel were *of one heart* to make David king," and (Jeremiah 32:39) "I will give them *one heart and one way*."

and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, -- These Christians understood that what they had, had been given to them by God to use for His glory. Therefore, when a brother or sister had a need those who could meet it were obligated to do so (cf. James 2:15-16; 1 John 3:17). The method was to give the money to the apostles who would distribute it (Acts 4:35-37).

but they had everything in common. -- This reiterates the theme of the Christian community's unity in sharing with those in need. See Acts 2:42-46. They felt and acted like a family. This was the church's first attempt to finance ministry. It was voluntary and mutual, not mandatory, Acts 5:4.

We must see that possessions do not matter, -see notes on Acts 4:34-35;
a) "commonism" not communism; not dictated, not demanded; but done in love.
b) When what we have becomes the Lord's.
c) An example is seen in Barnabas - Acts 4:36-37

÷Acts 4:33

Acts 4:33

And with great power -- "Great power" is a usual reference to the working of miracles by the apostles being enabled by the Holy Spirit. See the note on Acts 1:8; (Acts 10:38; Romans 1:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; Ephesians 3:16).

Here the "power" infers the working of miracles which gave credential value to the testimony of the apostles.

the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, -- The apostles continued working miracles that verified their testimony that Jesus was alive and in heaven today.

and great grace was upon them all. -- Abundant grace, like abundant living (cf. John 10:10) has little to do with material things. Notice this abundance was upon all of them, not just the leaders.

÷Acts 4:34
Acts 4:34

There was not a needy person among them, -- Notice that the "distribution" was not for the purpose of making everyone equal, but according to the "need" of the people. Acts 2:45; Acts 4:35.

The Greek word used here for "needy" is *endeēs*, and probably refers to those who required assistance in order to meet their daily necessities.

for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, -- The church felt a responsibility for one another. Those who had, gave freely to those in need (cf. Acts 4:35). This is not communism, but love in action, (cf. James 2:15-16; 1 John 3:17).

We should not think that the members sold their homes and became "homeless," but that those who had surplus lands and houses sold them to help those in need.

and brought the proceeds of what was sold -- The Christians learned that the *accumulation* of *material possession* was not the goal of life, but that loving and helping one another was the source of happiness.

There had been a great number from other nations present at Pentecost. It seems that many stayed longer than planned, most likely to continue learning from the apostles who were teaching daily in the Temple and from house to house. Some of these probably stayed longer than their finances allowed. Acts 2:41-47.

÷Acts 4:35
Acts 4:35

and laid it at the apostles' feet; -- This is a cultural idiom of giving something to another. They laid their goods and money at the Apostles' feet because they had laid their lives at Jesus' feet.

and distribution was made to each as any had need. -- Again notice that distribution was not make in order for everyone to have equal possessions, but was distributed according to "need."

÷Acts 4:36
Acts 4:36

Thus Joseph who was surnamed by the apostles Barnabas -- Barnabas was a Levite from Cyprus whose name was Joseph. The disciples nicknamed him Barnabas meaning "son of encouragement."

He was the first one to accept Paul's conversion (cf. Acts 9:17). He was obviously a leader in the Jerusalem Church (cf. Acts 11:22) as was Silas (cf. Acts 15:22).

He went to Tarsus and searched Saul out to get him to help with the work in Antioch (cf. Acts 11:19-27). He was the missionary companion of Paul on the first missionary journey (cf. Acts 13:1-4).

Clement of Alexandria reports that Barnabas was one of the seventy disciples sent out by Jesus (Luke 10:1).

(which means, Son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, -- Luke tells us what his name meant, "son of comfort or consolation [encouragement]."

The Jewish mind often spoke metaphorically of a "characteristic" dwelling in a person, and sometimes calling him the ***"son of ...*** " that characteristic. Thus, of Barnabas was ***"son of consolation"*** Acts 4:36, and James and John as ***"sons of thunder"*** Mark 3:17; and the term "son of perdition" in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, and "sons of disobedience" Ephesians 5:6.

See ISBE "Son; Sons" (3)
(3) The word "son" is used with a following genitive of quality to indicate some characteristic of the person or persons described. In the English the word "son" is usually omitted and the phrase is paraphrased as in 2 Samuel 3:34, where the words translated "wicked men" in the King James Version mean literally, sons or children of wickedness. - ISBE

a Levite, a native of Cyprus, -- This information helps us later in Acts 13:3-4 to understand why he and Paul began their missionary ministry on the island of Cyprus, that being Barnabas' home. A good place to start winning others for the Lord is those around where we live.

Cyprus -- An island in the Mediterranean located some 60 miles west off the Syrian coast.

÷Acts 4:37
Acts 4:37

sold a field which belonged to him, -- Whether the "field" was on Cyprus or somewhere around Jerusalem we don't know. Barnabas' sister, Mary (mother of John Mark), had a home in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12; Colossians 4:10), so Barnabas' "field" may have been in the area also.

field [a tract of land] -- This being an usual word for a piece of land, Utley says it may possibly refer to a burial plot.

and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. -- The language in this verse is similar to that in Acts 4:34-35. The narrative portrays Barnabas as an individual Christian who puts the needs of the community first, without regard to himself. Luke (the narrator) will present Ananias and Sapphira as the antithesis to Barnabas (Acts 5:1-11).

÷Acts 5:1
Acts 5:1

But a man named Anani'as with his wife Sapphi'ra sold a piece of property, -- "Ananias … Sapphira." These are two classic examples of hypocrisy among Christians who faked their spirituality to impress others (cf. Matthew 6:1-6, Matthew 6:16-18; Matthew 15:7; Matthew 23:13-36).

Ananias -- The name was common. See Acts 9:10-17, and Acts 23:2, Acts 24:1. It is the same as *Hananiah*, Jeremiah 28:1; Daniel 1:6-7.

Sapphira his wife -- A name probably derived from the name of the precious stone *sapphire*, which word is found both in Hebrew and Greek.

sold a possession -- The word may signify either lands, or buildings, or any kind of property. It is the word used of the young man who went away sorrowful from Jesus "for he had great possessions," Matthew 19:22; Mark 10:22. The LXX. use it of vineyards (Hosea 2:15).

÷Acts 5:2
Acts 5:2

and with his wife's knowledge -- This establishes that Sapphira was complicit in this sin and no less guilty than Ananias.

he kept back some of the proceeds, and brought only a part -- Ananias and Sapphira's sin was not in failing to give the entire sum of money (see Acts 5:4 and note); they sinned in pretending to honor Christ with the whole amount while withholding some of it for themselves. They lied, wanting to be honored for their perceived generosity.

Their devastating sin was their spiritual hypocrisy based on selfishness.

and laid it at the apostles' feet. -- This mimics what Barnabas did in Acts 4:37.

This same word (*nosphizomai*) is used in the Septuagint (LXX) of Joshua 7:1 to describe the sin of Achan. F. F. Bruce has made the comment that Ananias was to the early church what Achan was to the Conquest. This sin had the potential of hurting the entire church. This term is also used in Titus 2:10 of slaves stealing from their masters.

÷Acts 5:3
Acts 5:3

But Peter said, "Anani'as, why has Satan filled your heart -- This was no small matter; this sin was a betrayal of Jesus and harmed the integrity of the entire community. Ananias' act was equivalent to giving into the will of ***Satan***, the primary spiritual enemy of Jesus and His Church (Mark 1:13; cf. Ephesians 6:11; 1 Peter 5:8).

to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land? -- Peter, endowed by the Holy Spirit, knew the couple lied.

Ananias lied about what they were giving; apparently promising to give the whole amount. He did not merely lie to the apostles and fellow believers in the Church; his deceit is an affront to God Himself.

÷Acts 5:4
Acts 5:4

While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? -- There was no compulsion on any of the Christians to sell their possession. There seems to have been no necessity to give at all to the "needy-fund" unless a man felt that he could well afford to do so.

And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? -- Peter's rhetorical questions point out that Ananias was not obligated to sell his property or give the proceeds away. In addition, it was his choice to give all or part of the proceeds of the sale. Deception was not necessary to retain part of the money, so the only reason to lie was in order to claim greater honor and status within the Church.

How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." -- In Acts 5:3, and again in Acts 5:9, the sin of hypocrisy is described as lying to the Holy Spirit; here. hypocrisy is not only lying to people around you, it is lying to God.

÷Acts 5:5
Acts 5:5

When Anani'as heard these words, -- Speaking in the power of the Spirit, Peter's words are effective in bringing about the judgment that God pronounced upon Ananias.

he fell down and died. -- Like from the account of Achen, the people learned that death can be the consequence of sin. Sin is a serious matter to God. Divine judgment from God was inflicted immediately in this case.

We are reminded of the sever penalty inflicted on Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:2).

And great fear came upon all who heard of it. -- The community realizes with renewed gravity that personal integrity and the holiness of the community must be taken seriously.

÷Acts 5:6
Acts 5:6

The young men rose -- (Literally, *the younger.*) Some have suggested that these were persons connected with the church whose business it was to take charge of funerals. But it seems unlikely that, at a time when assistance had not been provided to relieve the Apostles from "serving tables" and distributing the funds to those who needed (Acts 6:1-4), there should already have been some organizing for this less pressing necessity.

and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him. -- Jews of the first century did not practice embalming (they still do not). A person had to be buried quickly, usually within one day.

Because of the offense there was no memorial service (especially for someone who died by divine judgment, see Deuteronomy 21:22-23).

÷Acts 5:7
Acts 5:7

After an interval of about three hours -- The irony of the story continues in this picture of the wife going about her day's business knowing of her husband's planned deceit yet ignorant of his unexpected death.

three hours -- This was time enough for the burial of the dead body, but yet so short that the news of what had happened to her husband had not reached Sapphira.

This shows the vividness of the account by an eyewitness. Luke's writing is characterized by this attention to details. It reflects both his writing style and research methods.

his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. -- Sapphira comes to where Peter is. It may have been a meeting service of the church where Ananias had come early to make his contribution.

One wonders why no one had told Sapphira what had happened. It leads to the supposition that there was a concerted determination on the part of those with knowledge to conceal the facts from her.

÷Acts 5:8
Acts 5:8

And Peter said to her, "Tell me -- The Apostle's question might have made Sapphira suspect that their scheme was discovered, but she is as firm in her story as her husband had been.

whether you sold the land for so much." -- That is, for "so much" and no more. Peter mentioned the sum Ananias had brought in, or perhaps it was lying on a table where he had put it at first.

And she said, "Yes, for so much." -- And "the lie," the pretense, continues.

Sapphira had the opportunity to confess the fraud, but continued in hypocrisy.

÷Acts 5:9
Acts 5:9

But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to tempt [test] the Spirit of the Lord? -- Sapphira's actions challenged God's holy reputation within the church and outside it, and her continued adherence to the lie when she was given a chance to tell the truth was a defiant act (Acts 5:8).

In making this decision, she placed herself not only in opposition to God but essentially thought herself to be beyond his power and ability to hold her accountable for her actions.

Hark, [behold] the feet of those that have buried your husband are at the door, -- Apparently, the feet of the young men were heard returning from the burial of Ananias.

and they will carry you out." -- Peter, enabled by the Holy Spirit predicted the punishment of Sapphira for her sin of hypocrisy. We are not told that Peter knew what would befall Ananias, but as the Spirit showed him what was to happen to the wife he may have known what the fate of the husband was to be also.

÷Acts 5:10
Acts 5:10

Immediately she fell down at his feet and died. -- She died instantly on the spot, at Peter's feet.

When the young men came in they found her dead, -- When the young men came in they found another like sad task awaiting them.

and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. -- The first two and most awful hypocrites in the church were buried side by side.

÷Acts 5:11
Acts 5:11

And great fear came upon the whole church, -- The word "fear" is φ βος, G5401 (*phobos*) and has the meaning "fear, terror" but with the idea here of "standing in awe" and could be translated "reverence" in this context.

An important lesson was stamped into the hearts of all who were making up "the church." (Luke 12:4-5; Hebrews 10:31).

church -- This is the first time this term is used in Acts in the Greek text from which the ESV, NIV, etc. are translated. Although it is in the Majority Text at Acts 2:47. This is the Greek term *ekklesia*. It is from two words, "out of" and "called"; therefore, the term implies the divinely *called-out ones*. Either "called out" to come together in assembly, or "called-out" to be different from the world, or both.

The word was used in secular society (cf. Acts 19:32, Acts 19:39-41) to refer to an "assembly." The word was used in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew O.T.) for the assembly of the "congregation" of Israel (cf. Numbers 16:3; Numbers 20:4).

The NT use of the word refers to the saints of the Lord, who are "called out" from the world to be different and who are meeting together in assembly. (2 Corinthians 6:17; Galatians 6:16; 1 Peter 2:5-9; Revelation 1:6),

and upon all who heard of these things. -- At the same time the community outside the church came to realize how serious it was to be a follower of Jesus. (cf. Acts 19:17)

÷Acts 5:12
Acts 5:12

Now many signs and wonders -- These were miracles that had evidential value and gave credit to the one performing them. These attested to both Christ's power and the apostles' authority to proclaim the message of His kingdom (e.g., Acts 2:43; Acts 4:30).

were done among the people by the hands of the apostles. -- Up to this point only the Apostles who had been baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4; Acts 2:43) were performing the miracles. After they laid hands on the seven men selected in Acts 6:3-6 and then others (Acts 8:14-17) do we see others also having the power (ability) to preform miracles.

And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. -- This was an open colonnade within the Temple area along the eastern wall of the Court of the Gentiles. Jesus often taught there also (cf. John 10:23). This was the site of Peter and John's first arrest. (cf. Acts 2:46; Acts 3:11; Acts 5:12; Acts 5:21; Acts 5:25)

÷Acts 5:13
Acts 5:13

None of the rest dared join them, -- The sense seems to be that as the Christians assembled together in the porch of Solomon (see end of the previous verse) other non-disciples (the ***rest***) passed by and would not ***join*** in their assembly.

but the people held them in high honor. -- While the people would not ***join*** the assembly of Christians in the Temple, they treated them with the utmost respect, and spoke of them with all honor.

And more and more of these men and women came to be believes, Acts 5:14.

÷Acts 5:14
Acts 5:14

And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, -- More and more of those that feared came to be believers and were added by the Lord to their number (the church), Acts 2:47.

multitudes both of men and women, -- Multitudes (both men and women) of the "people who held the disciples in high esteem," believed the message and obeyed the Gospel preached by the Apostles. (Colossians 2:6; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17).

÷Acts 5:15
Acts 5:15

so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, -- The people truly believed that Peter had divine healing power and sought out contact with him.

and laid them on beds and pallets, -- They were trying to make themselves easily available for healing.

that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. -- Though not stated directly but the implication is that such healing did take place. See Acts 19:12 where it is said specifically that diseases and evil spirits were healed by "*handkerchiefs or aprons"* from Paul.

÷Acts 5:16
Acts 5:16

The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, -- Until this point the Apostles' witness focused on Jerusalem. Their influence, however, is spreading out to places around Jerusalem as people recognize their power (cf. Acts 1:8).

bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, -- The Apostles were curing ordinary sickness as well as those afflicted with unnatural evil entities. Be sure to see that "sickness" was something different from than being afflicted by "unclean spirits."

The miracles by the Apostles were done in the name of Jesus and by His authority, and were much like what He had done Himself, Luke 4:40-41. (John 14:12).

and they were all healed. -- This outpouring of healing was an answer to the payer in Acts 4:29-30. Luke tell us they ALL healed. The aposltes never had to make any excuses for not being able to heal someone. Power to deliver those possessed of demons was twice promised by Jesus in the Scriptures (Luke 9:1; Mark 16:17; The faith of the apostles had grown since Matthew 17:16-18.)

÷Acts 5:17
A,ct 5:17

But the high priest rose up -- Here the title could refer to Annas (see note on Acts 4:6) or Caiaphas. While the multitudes thonged to be healed, the effect on the authorities was to provoke them to opposition.

The Greek word **"*rose up***" is the same used to describe the insurrections of Theudas and Judas, Acts 5:36-37.

and all who were with him, that is, the party of the Sad'ducees, -- The opposition has gathered its forces and now represents not only the family of Annas, but the heads of the party of the Sadducees.

The Sadducees were especially riled against the Apostles because they preached the "resurrection" of Jesus and the "resurrection" of all believers, while the Sadducees did not believe in any resurrection or after-life.

They were the prominent civil leaders at this time but they were loosing face.

and filled with jealousy -- The same Greek word, *pimplemi*, that is used to refer to one "filled" with the Spirit, is here used to say these religious leaders were "filled" with "jealousy."

The word for "jealousy" means "to boil." Therefore, it bears a zealousness in its mood to accomplish its desired end. **The high priest** and his party were indignant at the defiance of their authority, and at the success of the doctrine preached by the Apostles.

÷Acts 5:18
Acts 5:18

they arrested [laid their hands on] the apostles -- "Filled with jealousy" they arrested the apostles. The religious leaders assert their power by attempting to humiliate and discredit the apostles and thus their message.

and put them in the common [public] prison. -- Probably the same "ward" or prison where Peter and John had been kept before, Acts 4:3. But this time all of the apostles were incarcerated. Probably the officials came up on them all at the same time, probably while they were in a service at the Temple.

÷Acts 5:19
Acts 5:19

But at night an angel of the Lord -- Notice this designation "an angel" should not be confused with "the Angel of the Lord" in the OT (Exodus 3:2)

Frequently in Acts, God rescues the Apostles from danger or furthers the mission of the church through angelic intermediaries (e.g., Acts 8:26; Acts 12:7; Acts 27:23).

opened the prison doors -- Later the doors were found securely locked and the guards in place. How the Apostles passed by the guards without being noticed is unknown, Acts 5:23.

and brought them out and said, -- The angel escorts them to safety and then gives them a message. This seems an affront to the Sadducees who neither believed in "angels" or spirits. (Acts 23:8)

÷Acts 5:20
Acts 5:20

"Go and stand in the temple [courts] -- The Apostles are told by the angel to go to an open public place (not hide) and this would be a proof that God's purposes cannot be overturned.

There was to be no attempt made to conceal their escape. They were to go back to the same place where their most frequent teachings had been given before, and they were to continue the same teaching.

and speak to the people -- The Apostles were to openly ignore the ban the Council had earlier issued, Acts 4:18. Again, the prayer request of Acts 4:29 to speak boldly is attained..

all the words of this Life." -- Note that "words" is in the plural and is not "*logos*" but "*hrema*, which has the connotation of an ordered discourse. cf. John 6:68. "Life" is emphatic in the Greek. "This life" speaks to Christ Himself and Words of Life to the gospel (cf. Philippians 2:16; 1 John 1:1-4) which promises believers a resurrection to eternal life. Jesus Christ came into this world to provide abundant and eternal life to the spiritually dead (cf. John 1:4; John 11:25; 1 John 5:20).

They are not directed to appeal to the multitude for sympathy, nor to try and excite any feeling against those who had arrested them.

÷Acts 5:21
Acts 5:21

And when they heard this, they entered the temple at daybreak and taught. -- The Apostles follow the instructions of the angel. The word "daybreak" indicates a time as soon as possible after day dawn. They are there at the Temple as the priests offer the first sacrifice of the day at sunrise "at the very peep of day." (According to the Mishna.)

Jesus himself taught early in the morning (John 8:2); so it is not surprising to see find a large crowd would be found listening to the apostles in the temple area this early in the morning. Luke has just introduced this second persecution by telling of the popularity of the apostles. Once the news spread the apostles were teaching in the temple area, the crowd would soon swell in size.

Now the high priest came, and those who were with him, they called together the council -- The Sanhedrin is called together in an official meeting in the council chamber to consult on what should be done with the prisoners, of whose release they had not yet learned anything.

It seems to be the "Sadducees" (who really hated any teaching of a "resurrection") who are the leading prosecutors in this meeting. The Pharisees are fewer in number in the council, and lend a moderating influence at this time, as seen in their leader, Gamaliel, vs. 34.

and all the senate of Israel, -- "Senate" is here used in its original sense of "the older men," and is a literal rendering of the Greek *gerousia*, meaning the great Sanhedrin of 71 elders.
The name indicates that these were assessors added to the Council by reason of their age and weight of character. They are probably the same ones name in Luke 22:66 and Acts 22:5.

and sent to the prison to have them brought. -- They summon the prisoners not knowing anything of their escape.

÷Acts 5:22
Acts 5:22

But when the officers came, -- There was a Levitical guard who worked the Temple complex and a Captain of the guard who was over them. These (without the Captain) seem to be the officers to come to the jail to fetch the apostles to the Council meeting.

they did not find them in the prison, -- To their surprise the officers find the jail empty. The Apostles are simply not there. The prison sentries were standing watch over an empty cell. (Acts 5:23). The words seem to indicate a thoral search was made of the entire prison.

and they returned and reported, -- How embarrassing it must have been for these Temple guards and their Chief to make this report of the missing prisoners.

It was a serious business when a Roman soldier let a prisoner escape (Matthew 28:12-14; Acts 16:27; Acts 27:42-43). However, it appears this guard is not as strict in its discipline.

Some on the Council at least must have wondered if there were any of the jail guards who were sympathetic to the apostles. But the guards could have been like those at the tomb who were

frozen and blind when the angel led the Apostles out (Matthew 28:4; See also Acts 12:6-10 when an angel freed Peter from Herod's prison).

÷Acts 5:23
Acts 5:23

"We found the prison securely locked and the sentries standing at the doors, -- There was no outward sign of a jail-break. As far as they could tell the door had not been unlocked, and the locks were still in place. The sentries were not aware that their charge was no longer there.

but when we opened it we found no one inside." -- The cell where the Apostles had been placed was now completely empty. The officers making the report to the Council had no answer how the prisoners went missing.

÷Acts 5:24
Acts 5:24

Now when the captain of the temple -- Apparently the "captain" had not accompanied the "officers" who had gone to fetch the prisoners. We wonder if he administered any discipline to the sentries? Nothing is said, but they probably got a severe interrogation and a *dressing-down*.

and the chief priests heard these words, -- The "officers" who went for the prisoners report back to their "captain" and chief priests, "The prisoners are missing!"

they were much perplexed about them, -- The council is disturbed and at a loss over what they hear.

wondering what this would come to. -- They do not know what step to take next.

It is worthy of note that when the Apostles are brought before them in the end, the magistrates avoid all questions about how they had escaped. They clearly wished to have no more testimony to the supernatural powers which had been so often manifested in connection with Jesus and His followers.

Caiaphas and his party could not be ignorant how Jesus Himself had come missing from His grave to the great terror of the Jewish guard set over the tomb. They must have remembered the bribe they gave those men to fabricate a false story. (Matthew 28:11-15).

With the opinions these authorities held, we can understand their perplexity and their silence on the subject of the Apostles' escape.

÷Acts 5:25
Acts 5:25

And some one came and told them, -- The proceedings of the Sanhedrin were evidently well known, and the hall of judgment was not far from where the Apostles were teaching at this very time.

We can imagine someone breaking away from the crowd listening to the Apostles and running to the judgment hall where the Council was meeting.

"The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple -- The word "standing" looks back to the command of the angel in verse 20, "Go stand in the temple and speak..." (Acts 5:20).

This "*standing"* implies the calm, fearless, bold attitude of the Apostles. They were not like prisoners who had escaped, and were seeking a place to hide; but like men whose work had been interrupted, and who, as soon as they were able, had come back to it again.

and teaching the people." -- This "some one" knew that these men preaching in the temple had been put into prison just the night before.

Here these Apostles had not fled the city! Instead they were openly breaking the ban that had been put on them. The Sanhedrin must have felt their authority challenged.

÷Acts 5:26
Acts 5:26

Then the captain with the officers went -- Now the "captain" of the Temple guard accompanies his "officers" to re-arrest the Apostles.

> David Roper imagines this scene with a touch of humor. "Imagine the nervous captain. The men he needed to arrest could make the lame walk and cast out demons. Furthermore, they could escape from maximum security without anyone's knowledge. In addition, the people admired them (see John 7:45-49). Imagine the captain whispering to Peter, 'I need your help. We are under orders to bring you in. If we don't do it, we will be punished--but if we try to do it, the situation could turn ugly.' Peter probably smiled and said, 'We'll come with you.' He may have passed the word to the other apostles before they quietly went with the armed guards through the restless crowd."

and brought them, but without violence, -- The officers, under the authority of Sanhedrin, are walking on egg-shells. They dare not abuse the escaped prisoners, but seemingly treat them with utmost respect.

for they were afraid of being stoned by the people. -- The Apostles are not violent; they are like their Master, who "When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten," 1 Peter 2:23.

Peter had learned his lesson when in the garden he had pulled a sword and cut off a man's ear, only to be reprimanded by the Master and warned against such violent action (Luke 22:50-51).

The Sadducean priests simply did not dare to arouse the anger of the Jerusalem mob. It is not to be thought that the Christians would have stoned the officers, but the non-Christians whose sympathies were all with the disciples might have broken into violence if provoked. (Acts 21:30-36).

÷Acts 5:27
Acts 5:27

And when they had brought them, -- The Captain and the guards escorted the Apostles to the judgment hall without any violence.

they set them before the council. -- The Apostles are arranged in the center of the council who are seated in a semi-circle arrangement on a raised platform.

And the high priest questioned them, -- Annas was recognized by the people as the "high priest" but legally the Romans had designated his son-in-law Caiaphas as the high priest and the one responsible for civil and religious order (cf. Acts 4:6).

Annas' line of questioning is found in the next verse.

÷Acts 5:28
Acts 5:28

saying, "We strictly charged you -- The term "charged" is found in other documents to mean an official summons to court or an order from a court.

The Apostles had clearly refused to accept the ban imposed by the Jewish leaders. The charge had been given only to Peter and John, (Acts 4:13; Acts 4:18) but the council assume that it would have been by them conveyed to the rest of the twelve.

not to teach in this name -- It appears that the council themselves do not even want to mention the name "Jesus." They were trying their best to get Jerusalem to forget entirely this name and all the Man had done and taught.

They go at once to the great offence in their eyes. They objected to the ***name*** of Jesus of Nazareth, whom they knew they had crucified, but who was proclaimed to be alive again, and in whose name His followers manifested such mighty works.

yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching -- The enemies of Jesus admit how successful the Apostles where in spreading their message. It is interesting that "Jerusalem" here has in the Greek the article "the Jerusalem."

Just what did the council accuse the apostles of doing? “You have filled Jerusalem with your teaching!” And this is true in fact and not an exaggeration. (The perfect tense is extensive, it reaches from the past to a point in the present; the accusative indicates what is filled, and the genitive that with which the filling has been accomplished.) The very teaching, this reprehensible doctrine (Acts 2:42) the Apostles preach, had spread over the entire city in bold violation of the Sanhedrin’s stringent command.

[See A. T. Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research. 4th edition.}

and you intend to bring this man's -- This shows the contempt of the Jewish leaders. They never mention Jesus' name.

"The phrase is remarkable as furnishing the first instance of that avoidance of the name of Christ which makes the Talmud, in the very same terms, refer to him most frequently as *Peloni,* = “so and so.” - (Vincent Word Studies, Acts 5:28).

this man's blood upon us." -- They had indeed said to Pilate "*His blood be on us and on our children!*" (Matthew 27:25). Peter has testified that Jesus was crucified with the approval of the council (Acts 4:10), indicting them as accomplices in His murder.

Peter and John were continuing to assert that these Jewish leaders engineered Jesus' death (cf. Acts 5:30; Acts 3:14-15). This was also Stephen's accusation in Acts 7:52.

÷Acts 5:29
Acts 5:29

But Peter and the apostles answered, -- Peter is the spokesman, but he represented the sentiment of all the others.

"We must obey God rather than men. -- We have a greater responsibility to listen to God's law than to man's. God's law should take precedent. (see note on Acts 4:19)

must obey -- This word *dei* means there's a moral necessity. This shows the Apostles' obligation to preach the truth, regardless of the consequences (cf. Acts 4:19).

Again, Luke makes no attempt to do more than produce for us the substance of such speeches that he notes.

The Christian's Duty to His Nation

1 Timothy 2:1-2 Pray for the king, and all in authority.
Romans 13:1 ff. vs. 1-7 Be in subjection to government.
Acts 4:19 More important to listen to God
Acts 5:29 We ought to obey God rather than men.
Mark 12:17 To render to Caesar (pay our taxes)
Matthew 22:21 -- Render to Caesar His Due
Luke 20:25
Romans 13:1 Remember that governments are appointed by God
John 19:11 God grants governments their power
Romans 13:2 Not to be a rebel to overthrow
Romans 13:3 Governments must support good
Romans 13:4 Governments are God's servants
They are God's ministers of vengeance
Romans 14:5 We are to be in subjection for two reasons.
Romans 13:6 We are to pay our taxes
Romans 13:7 Render them their due, respect and honor

The Nation's Responsibility
Romans 13:3 Support good, punish the evil
Romans 13:4 Execute justice upon the evil

What God Says About Nations
Proverbs 14:34 Nations obliged to do right.
2 Chronicles 7:14 Nations to turn from wicked ways

÷Acts 5:30
Acts 5:30

The God of our fathers -- This way of addressing God demonstrates that Peter does not now dissociate himself from his Judaism, but still embraces it as his heritage.

Christians believe they are the true spiritual heirs and descendants of the faithful OT saints and prophets (cf. Romans 2:28-29; Galatians 6:16; 1 Peter 3:5-9; Revelation 1:6).

raised Jesus -- In saying that God "raised Jesus" whom the Council had called a blasphemer, Jesus, therefore, must have been an innocent man. Would God have "raised" such a man unless He was innocent? Hardly! Peter uses what God did for Jesus as proof He was the Messiah! (Acts 3:13).

whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. -- The high priest had protested in verse 28 that the apostles' preaching implied that the religious leaders were responsible for Jesus' death. Peter now directly charges them with crucifying Jesus. His language alludes to Deuteronomy 21:22-23.

"It;s the truth! You did kill Jesus. You did deliver him to the Romans and then clamored for his teall till the Romans, at your insistance, crucified him."

tree -- From Acts 10:39, we find that the word "cross" there is from the same word found here, *xulon*, "tree," and indicates that the cross was made out of rough logs.

÷Acts 5:31
Acts 5:31

God exalted him at his right hand as Leader [Prince] and Savior, -- The term "exalted" is translated in John 3:14 as "lifted up" and in Philippians 2:5 as "highly exalted."

The "right hand" is the symbol of one's might; Cf. Exodus 15:6, and "His right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory" (Psalms 98:1). Mark 16:19; Philippians 2:9-11.

Leader [Prince] -- For "Prince" see note on Acts 3:15. The term here for "Leader" can mean "chief," "pioneer," or "prince." It was also used of the founder of a school or family (cf. Hebrews 2:10; Hebrews 12:2).

Christ's rule over man is for the purpose that He may save them.

Savior -- This term is used in the OT for the judges who delivered Israel from the oppression of their enemies. Christians used it uniquely for Jesus, who was Lord (*kurios*). Jesus rescues all who trust in Him from sin and its consequences. He was given this title at His birth (Luke 2:11).

to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. -- "To give repentance" means that God gives one (or a nation) the opportunity to repent of a sin they have done. Thus offering the way of salvation to all those who are ready to accept it.

forgiveness -- Forgiveness is granted to those who obey His will. Israel's hope is based on God's gracious forgiveness of the sins of those who come to trust in Jesus (compare Isaiah 53:10-12 – Isaiah 54:1-3; Zechariah 3:8-10; Zechariah 12:10-14 – Zechariah 13:1).

÷Acts 5:32
Acts 5:32

And we are witnesses to these things, -- The Apostles were eye-witnesses of Jesus' being alive after His resurrection, and witnesses to His ascension back into heaven. This was in addition to witnessing His miracles and receiving His teaching from Him first hand for about three years during Jesus' ministry.

we -- The "we" are the Apostles, who are standing before the Sanhedrin at this very time.

to these things -- Peter repeats what he has said before -- that he and his fellow apostles were witnesses of these things. (Acts 2:32). Now the Sanhedrin judges may close their minds to the truths Peter is affirming, but we must remember that this testimony comes from men whose teaching has been credentialled, not only by miracles (such as Luke has just recounted earlier in this chapter) but also by a marvelous delivery from a guarded prison. There is no reason to doubt what Peter affirms. - Reese

and so is the Holy Spirit -- cf. Acts 4:31-33; Not only did the Apostle give their testimony to the truth regarding Jesus, but the Holy Spirit gave witness by the miracles, signs and wonders.

The witness of the Holy Spirit had the design of confirming the message those filled with the Spirit delivered cf. Acts 6:8; Acts 5:12-16; Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4.

And so is the Holy Spirit -- The reference, it appears from the context, is to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost),which gave to the apostles the power to work miracles. Peter is saying that the preaching of the apostles has been credentialled. - Reese

whom God has given to those who obey him." -- God had given the Holy Spirit to the Apostles as proof they were obedient to the Lord. "Otherwise, Sanhedrin, how could we do these things?" Acts 2:43; Acts 4:33.

God has Given -- Notice the past tense, not "God will give ..."

Holy Spirit ... given -- Many assume this is a proof text of the "indwelling" Holy Spirit that God gives to new converts. **BUT** notice here the Holy Spirit is a "*witness*" to the things the apostles were preaching, ***thus*** the reference is to the evidential value of the miracles and signs worked by the Spirit through the messengers of God, (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:2-4.)

[If this was speaking about today, where is the "witnessing" by the miracles and signs?]

Whom God has given to those who obey Him - Peter is saying to the Sanhedrin, "We have been obeying God rather than you men. [Acts 5:29] Do you want proof of that? God gives the power to work miracles only to those who obey Him. We have the power to work miracles. Therefore it follows that we have been obeying Him!" The fact of the Holy Spirit being given to obedient men must be understood as something that would credential the apostles as obedient to God. Otherwise such a appeal is useless.

See the notes at **Ephesians 3:17** on the **"Indwelling"**

÷Acts 5:33
Acts 5:33

When they heard this -- "This" was actually the admission of guilt by the apostles to both charges. 1) They had disregarded the ban issued by the Council; 2) They charged the Council with putting to death the Messiah.

they were enraged -- They Council is extremely agitated and filled with rage and indignation. It is the irritation that comes when one has been proved wrong but with pride and stubbornness sticks to the same position. The same word is used again in Acts 7:54.

and wanted to kill them. -- Peter's defense has exasperated the Sanhedrin members beyond measure, and almost turned the court into a mob.

The NASB translates it **"intending to slay them**." The Sanhedrin members were so angry that they have made up their minds to kill the apostles. The formal decree had not been passed, but they (the Sadducee parties of the Sanhedrin) had decided what to do. There was only one way to silence these men, kill them and then forget about it.

÷Acts 5:34
Acts 5:34

But a Pharisee -- At this point in time, the Pharisees seem to be not as determined as the Sadducees in the persecution of the disciples. (Paul, in his hearing before a Roman Tribune in Acts 23:6-9; (Acts 24:21) also recognized the difference in these two parties and took advantage of it in his argument.)

in the council named Gamaliel, -- (Note the four things that Luke says about this man here.) He was the prominent leader among the Pharisees, being the fourth in a dynasty of Jewish scholars which began with Hillel, and continued for centuries. Paul was one of his students, (Acts 22:3); and had Paul remained with the Jews, he would very probably have been the next in the line of this dynasty of scholars.

a teacher of the law, -- He was a "scribe", "teacher of the law," and "lawyer," which are synonymous terms in the Bible. A "lawyer" was a "scribe" who specialized in legal questions involving interpretation of the Law. A "teacher of the law" was a scribe who specialized in preserving and copying the Law of Moses (as well as the traditional laws of the Pharisees). All were men who spent many hours studying and mastering the Law of Moses.

Gamaliel was such a prominent teacher that Jewish young men came from all over the world to study under him. (Acts 22:2).

held in honor by all the people, -- He was so loved and respected by the people he was given the high honorary title of "Rabban," (Honored Master). It is reported to be the first of only seven men ever given this title.

stood up -- "Stood up" pictures Gamaliel as rising to speak to the council. He is given "the floor" to speak his mind.

and ordered the men to be put outside for a while. -- It seems customary, while the council deliberated, to command the accused to retire from the court room. (cf. Acts 4:15). Gamaliel is

pictured as holding his position on the floor until the officers had removed the Apostles from the meeting.

÷Acts 5:35
Acts 5:35

And he said to them, -- Just how Luke knew what went on among the members of the Sanhedrin in closed session has often been debated, though we cannot know for sure. It may be Paul heard the gist of the discussion from his teacher Gamaliel and then told it to Luke. Or there may have been secret sympathizers of the apostles in the council who "leaked" to them what was said and from whom Luke picked it up. (EBC).

"Men of Israel, take care what you do with these men. -- Be careful, or caution, about making a decision. Don't act hastily here, for there may be something that we have possibly not considered in this matter. Let's give this thing a good thinking through before we act.

See note at Acts 4:15 how Luke could know what was said.

÷Acts 5:36
Acts 5:36

For before these days Theu'das arose, -- How long before this it was that Theudas appeared on the scene of history cannot be determined with certainly. However, as Gamaliel mentions Theudas before Judas of Galilee (who lived about 6 A.D.), it is probably that Theudas lived close to the time Jesus was born or before.

rose up -- This means that Theudas incited an attempted revolution.

giving himself out to be somebody, -- He claimed to be some eminent prophet, or pretensions to royalty, or even to being the Messiah himself. About the time Jesus was born there were a number of false prophets who came claiming to be the Messiah.

and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him; -- There were several bands of robbers and revolutionaries, some more and some less then this 400 mentioned here. The Roman authorities continually had to deal with such uprisings.

but he was slain and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. -- The word "followed" is the commonly used term to mean "*induced to believe; persuaded; to believe a thing or person*". (ἐπε θοντο G3982,) It speaks of people who believed his pretensions; and Gamaliel, it appears, deliberately used language like this to refect on those who have "followed" what the apostles were teaching.

Gamaliel makes the point that the pretensions of Theudas were hollow, and the movement died out.

÷Acts 5:37
Acts 5:37

After him Judas the Galilean arose -- Josephus gives an account of a Judas of Galilee who led a revolt against the enrollment for Roman taxation.

in the days of the census -- This was the second enrollment under Quirinius. (Josephus, *Antiquities*, XVII. 10.5) It was made at the time when Archelaus was deposed as King in 6 AD because of his extreme cruelty and Judea became of Roman province and placed under a Roman governor (*Antiquities*, XX. 5.2).

This enrollment of Acts 5:37 is not to be confused with the "first enrollment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria." That first census took place about 6 B.C. (cf. Luke 2:1-3).

and drew away some of the people after him; -- Ellicott affirms that the revolution attempted by Judas was by far the most important of the attempts to throw off the yoke of Rome. Among his followers it was unlawful to pay tribute to Caesar in any form.

he also perished, and all who followed him were scattered. -- Josephus, writing long after the movement had collapsed, says that some scattered followers could still be found in Galilee and were called Zealots (or Canaanites). We read of such a sect in the NT

Judas perished in a battle with Roman forces and his sons, Jacob and Simon, continued after his death til they were captured and crucified during the procuratorship of Tiberius Alexander. (Josephus, *Antiquities*, XX 5.2).

÷Acts 5:38
Acts 5:38

So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone; -- Gamaliel advised the council to take care and not oppose or threaten the apostles. The reason why he advised this is drawn from his two illustrations. If what the apostles were doing was of men, it would fade away just as did the movements of Theudas and Judas.

for if this plan or this undertaking is of men, -- If the apostles had made up the stories they preached, or if they were fake leaders like Theudas and Judas, the council did not need to worry about their movement.

it will fail [be overthrown]; -- We should remember that Gamaliel's advice is uninspired advice, and that his guidelines for dealing with various movements or false teaching are not guidelines to be followed today. In fact, teaching that opposes and/or contradicts the Truth should be met immediately. This is one of the prime duties of elders in the Lord's church, Titus 1:9-11.

Many teachings that oppose the Truth have stood for a long time, even when they plainly are not of God, and are exposed as false by the Holy Scriptures.

Rather than follow the uninspired Gamaliel today, let's follow the standard the Bible gives us; how does a man's and his doctrine compare with the inspired Word of God? (1 Timothy 6:3-5 ff.).

÷Acts 5:39
Acts 5:39

but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. -- If God is the author of this religion, you will not be able to suppress it, because God is Almighty and He is unchanging. This conditional sentence from Gamaliel implies that he is thinking the apostolic movement "probably" is of men.

Gamaliel's words suggest it would be hopeless to be found fighting against God. You would only lose!

You might even be found opposing God!" -- In the Greek this is "lest at any time," at some future date, when it will then be too late to retract your doings, you will have been found to have been fighting against God.

"Fighting against God" is a idea that recurs in the reasoning of the Pharisee who took Paul's side in a later scene in this same court room (Acts 23:9).

÷Acts 5:40
Acts 5:40

So they took his advice, -- The Greek says, "They were persuaded by him." While the Sadducees were the recognized leaders by the Romans, the Pharisees commanded so much more popular respect than the Sadducees, that the Sadducees had to have the approval and support of the Pharisees, or their decisions would be disobeyed and their leadership ignored.

In the present case, where the defendants were as popular as the apostles were, it was especially important to have the Pharisees' support. Gamaliel has stated the position for the Pharisees in this trial, and so the Sadducees must abandon their design of putting the apostles to death (Acts 5:33).

and when they had called in the apostles, -- The apostles are called back into the courtroom to hear the verdict.

they beat [flogged] them -- Beating or whipping was a common method of punishment among the Jews. Stoning was the Jewish method of capital punishment. Imprisonment doesn't seem to be a Jewish method of punishment, but only of containment until a verdict was reached.

The usual amount of lashes Jews inflicted was thirty-nine. (2 Corinthians 11:24). To be beaten by the Jewish court was consider a shameful disgrace. A Roman citizen could not be beaten. Roman imprisonment for a convicted criminal was to hard labor. Capital punishment for non-Romans was crucifixion and/or other methods. But Roman citizens were beheaded in cases of capital punishment.

and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. -- Gamaliel had advised, "Let them go, let them alone." Though they abandoned their already fixed plan to execute the apostles, the Sadducees did not follow Gamaliel's advice altogether.

The court must have compromised to this disciplinary measure demanded by the Sadducees in exchange for averting the more violent punishment the infuriated Sanhedrin wished to impose.

÷Acts 5:41
Acts 5:41

Then they left the presence of the council, -- They had prayed for protection from these religious leaders. They had been flogged, but their lives had been spared and they could preacher another day.

rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor [shame] for the [*His*] name. -- Most men would have found the public whipping very disgraceful. But the apostles rejoiced! Perhaps because they were permitted to imitate the example of Christ (who had been beaten by Roman soldiers, and also possibly by Jewish (John 19:1; Luke 22:63 ff.).

Perhaps this beating was considered evidence they were doing as God expected them to do, for Jesus had said they could expect such treatment. (Matthew 5:11-12; Matthew 10:17; Matthew 10:22).

considered worthy -- By whom? In the eyes of God? In the eyes of the Sanhedrin? And in whose eye was it a "shame"? In the eyes of the Sanhedrin, or in the eyes of the people?

÷Acts 5:42
Acts 5:42

And every day -- See Acts 2:42. The apostles continued to disregard the threats of the Sanhedrin, and they continued to obey God.

in the temple and at home [from house to house] -- They taught right under the noses of the men who had just told them not to speak in the name of Christ. It is probable that they continued to use Solomon's porch, and the captain of the temple would act on the suggestion of Gamaliel (agreed to by whole Sanhedrin) that they let the movement take its course without interruption.

The apostles apparently went house to house telling the story of Jesus to all those who would hear them. Perhaps members would hold "house" meetings and invite their neighbors in to hear the gospel.

they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ. -- Nothing could stop them from preaching and teaching that Jesus was the Messiah! (In a day when some scholars attempt to find a distinction between the *keryma* (the preaching material) and *didache* (the teaching material) here we see that both were concerned with "Jesus as the Christ."

÷Acts 6:1
Acts 6:1

Now at this time. -- It is now about AD 33 or 34. It is very near the time that Paul was converted (cf. chapter 9), and from our study of New Testament Chronology we have dated this conversion in AD 34.

While the disciples were increasing in number. Compare comments at Acts 5:14. By this time some estimate that, counting men, women, and young people, there would have been close to 20,000 Christians in and around the city of Jerusalem.

Number -- multiplied -- The number of believers was growing, cf. Acts 5:14; Acts 6:7

a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews. -- This "complaint" sounds as if there had been some partiality shown in the distribution of the common

fund. We see in this complaint the first symptom of a loss of the harmony and oneness and unanimous good will noted by Luke earlier.

1 While it is lamentable that what was probably an accidental oversight led to such complaining, it should be remembered that even so, such murmuring or whisperings of discontent is a sin, and is frequently condemned in the New Testament.

2 Who were these "Hellenistic Jews"? In the time when the gospel was first preached, there were two classes of Jews. The Hebrews were those who were born in Palestine and who spoke the Hebrew language. The Hellenists were those who were born of Jewish parentage outside of Palestine, who spoke the Greek language, and who used the Septuagint in their synagogues.

The Hellenistic Jews, to a greater or lesser degree, had adopted more of the Greek ideals and customs after Alexander the Great had carried that Greek culture over the world when he had conquered it about 300 years earlier.

In Jewish communities the Hebrews, who had not adopted the Greek customs, tended to look down on the Hellenists as being somewhat less holy. Perhaps some of the old feelings are in the background of this present dispute. Hellenistic Jews were also known as "those of the Dispersion."

because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. -- We learn incidentally from this verse that very early in the history of the Church there was a special provision made for widows (and probably orphans, too) of the congregation to be provided for out of the common fund.

We find them in the church at Joppa (Acts 9:41) and at Ephesus. (1 Timothy 5:3 ff) It is clear from the Epistles that widows were objects of special attention in the early church, and that the first generation of Christians regarded it as a matter of indispensable obligation to provide for their needs. (James 1:27)

daily ministration -- διακον ᾳ, *diakonia.* Were these men "deacons"? They certainly were in the general sense, and were the forerunners of the official work of "deacons" seen later - 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

In the Jerusalem area, with so many thousands to care for, it became an easy matter for the apostles to accidentally overlook some whose needs were greatest in the physical realm. The words "daily serving of food" imply something of an organized administration of the common fund described in Act 4:32-37. 3 The funds raised by the sale of property and goods (and laid at the apostles' feet) were understood to be designated for the equal benefit of all those in need. When some were accidentally overlooked, the overlooked ones began to complain about those "Hebrews." (Acts 4:35, Acts 5:2)

1 Acts 4:32.
2 Philippians 2:14; 1 Peter 4:9.
3 Up to this time, all care of the needy had been in the hands of the apostles (Acts 4:35, Acts 5:2). The majority of commentators feel that the apostles are the ones complained against.

÷Acts 6:2
Acts 6:2

And the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said. -- "The twelve" is the name for the apostles. Matthias has been added to the apostolic college after the apostasy of Judas, and thus the original number was still whole. This mention of the apostles indicates that for the first three or four years of the Church, all twelve of the apostles were still in and around Jerusalem.

Was the whole Church included in the "congregation" called together? If so, this would be quite a group assembled! Or were just the Grecians assembled? Perhaps only those who had been engaged in the complaint are called together, and they themselves are given opportunity to be the means of satisfactorily removing all cause of complaint.

It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God. -- "Not desirable" means "not satisfactory." The gospel is here called the "word of God." (cf. Acts 6:4) The twelve who had been with Jesus had been chosen to proclaim what they had seen and heard.

For such eyewitness testimony there were no substitutes. Therefore, nothing must interfere with their proclamation. Before their earthly service is over, the twelve must spread the "word of God" far and wide – first by the spoken word, and then by putting it in written form for future generations.

They had found that the daily responsibility of distributing the common fund was causing them to neglect the preaching and teaching to the extent that their primary task was being limited. They were not wholly forsaking the preaching, but they found their time severely infringed upon.

in order to serve tables. -- The word "table" is used with several different connotations. It may speak of the table off which a family would eat its food, at times even being equivalent to the food which is set on the table.

The word was also used for the table on which a moneychanger kept the different kinds of money he used for exchange purposes. So in this context, which speaks of the receipt and disbursement of the common fund, the word is well suited whether it speaks of food being put on the table of the poor, or simply of the distribution of funds so the poor can purchase their own needs.

serve tables -- Probably the "tables" were where distribution to those needing help was given. The term also denotes the daily needs of a family.

serve -- or minister, διακονε ν, διακονέω *diakoneo* ¯, to serve, to minister.

It is from the word "serve" (and "minister" in verse 4) – i.e., from the work they did – that we determine these seven men were chosen as "deacons." Although the word "deacon" is not found in the book of Acts as an official designation, and although we are not told in any definite language that these men were "deacons," still they did the work of deacons.

÷Acts 6:3
Acts 6:3

Therefore, brethren, -- "Therefore" is ουν G3767, "therefore, accordingly, consequently." or according to many MSS, it reads δὲ, or "but," and the sentence ends with "from among you."

pick out [look out] from among you -- Notice that the congregation selected the men and the apostles gave their approval Acts 6:6. There is a question whether the "among you" included all the believers in Jerusalem, or more likely, from "among you" Grecian-believers (Acts 6:1) since they were the ones complaining.

seven men of good repute, -- To protect the holiness of the community and to safeguard impartiality in the distribution of goods, the community must choose people who have shown themselves godly and wise.

seven -- Some think this number was fixed on because that was the number of person chosen to manage public business in Jewish towns, Deuteronomy 16:18. (Josephus, *J.W.* 2.20.5 571).

It may simply just be the number of men the apostles judged would be needed to cover the task of distribution.

full of the Spirit -- Men approved with respect to fruits of a holy life Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9. No evidence of miracles being performed by others as yet except by the apostles. (Acts 5:12)

We only observe others beside the apostles performing miracles after they have laid hands on these seven.

and of wisdom, -- Men with intelligence (G4678) and natural ability to administer their duty successfully.

whom we may appoint to this duty. -- While leaving the selection of the men to the assembled congregation, the apostles themselves would "appoint" or ordain the men their responsibility.

÷Acts 6:4
Acts 6:4

But we will devote ourselves -- The "we" refers to the apostles who were going to "give themselves" to the earnest conduct that fit their mission. The verb speaks of perseverance or giving constant attention to a thing.

to prayer and to the ministry of the word." -- The first duty, teaching and preaching, was not to take second place to helping the poor when others could do that. (Acts 1:14; Acts 2:42; Romans 12:12).

The same word *diakonia* used in verse 1 for "the daily *serving*" is used here for the *ministry* of the word.

÷Acts 6:5
Acts 6:5

And what they said pleased the whole multitude, -- The suggestion made by the apostles met approval as a solution to the problem of the Hellenists (Grecian) widows being neglected. The phrase, "the whole multitude," speaks to the unity of the believers in this matter.

and they chose Stephen, -- Stephen will come on the stage to play an important part in chapters 6 & 7. He had the distinguished honor of being the first Christian martyr. We know nothing of Stephen's previous life or training.

a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, -- Stephen, along with all the men selected, met the criteria suggested by the apostles (Acts 6:3).

and Philip, -- Acts chapter 8 give us a record of some of Philip's preaching activities. Some of these men, at least, grew into the role of performing miracles and preaching the Word effectively.

There is one tradition that said he had belonged to the seventy Jesus had sent out. (Luke 10:1)

and Proch'orus, nd Nica'nor, and Ti'mon, and Par'menas, -- All seven names are Grecian. Men were chosen from among the group that was being neglected. Probably such men would have better knowledge of who those in need were.

and Nicola'us, a proselyte of Antioch -- Nicolas being called a proselyte shows that he, as a Gentile, had been converted to Judaism at some time before he became a convert to Christianity.

The only one whose origin is mentioned; he must have been important to Luke. Being Greek he seems to have played an important part in the church at Antioch which became a center for Gentile mission work. Much later more time and information is given about Antioch Acts 13:1 ff.

There is no clear reason for connecting this Nicolas with the the rise of the sect of the Nicolaitans which are mentioned with so much disapprobation in Revelation 2:6-7. (Irenaeus and Epiphanius, two of the Early Church Fathers, connect the rise of the Nicolaitans to a man by the same name.)

÷Acts 6:6
Acts 6:6

These they set before the apostles, -- Notice that the congregation as a whole selected the men Acts 6:3 and presented them to the apostles for their ordination.

and they prayed and laid their hands upon them. -- A sign of official recognition for a designated work. It signified the affirmation, support, and identification with someone to a ministry. See Acts 13:1-3; 1 Timothy 4:14; 1 Timothy 5:22; cf. Numbers 27:23.

Also the means of the imparting spiritual gifts Acts 8:17-18. It is after this laying on of hands by the apostles that we later find Stephen doing wonders and miracles Acts 6:8 and speaking with such wisdom and spirit Acts 6:10; and Philip also working miracles in Samaria Acts 8:13.

÷Acts 6:7
Acts 6:7

And the word of God increased; -- Luke gives periodic statements summarizing the growth of the church and the spread of the gospel (cf. Acts 2:41, Acts 2:47; Acts 4:4; Acts 5:14; Acts 9:31; Acts 12:24; Acts 13:49; Acts 16:5; Acts 19:20).

The verb tense indicates gradual and continuous growth.

and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, -- With the apostles now free from administration to the needy they were able to give themselves to the ministry of the word and the results were this steady increase in the number of disciples.

At least two of the seven, and perhaps more or all of them, are soon seen also involved in evangelistic work. Later we see specific examples of Stephen and Philip at work.

and a great many of the priests -- The gospel message begins to win over even religious leaders, despite ongoing opposition by the higher Jewish religious leadership.

These priests would lose their status and support, as well as many of their friends. This is no doubt the reason why such special mention is made of them. But their conversion may have influenced many others to come to believe in Christ.

The conversion of large numbers of priests may account for the vicious opposition that arose against Stephen.

were obedient to the faith. -- *"Faith" is* used objectively for the Christian religion. Note that ***"Faith"*** is seen as something to be ***obeyed***! Romans 1:5; Romans 16:26

÷Acts 6:8
Acts 6:8

And Stephen, -- Stephen was selected first to "serve tables" but we find now find him performing miracles and preaching Acts 6:5.
He is a wonderful example of someone growing and developing in the faith and moving on to a higher task.

full of grace and power, -- Stephen's faith and labor undoubtedly attributed to him growing in "favor" ("grace") with God. "Power" was shown in the working of miracles.

Some MSS read "full of faith," referring to his trust and conviction.

> **"Full of"** is a favorite form of expression with Luke. Cf. where we read of Dorcas, "full of good works and acts of charity" (Acts 9:36); Elymas, "full of all subtilty" (Acts 13:10); and the Ephesians "full of wrath" (Acts 19:28). The sense is "given up to" or "devoted to."

did [was performing] great wonders and signs among the people. -- His "power" from God showed itself in the wonders and signs he did. The tense of the verb indicates a continuous exercise of the spiritual gifts which he received at the time the apostles laid their hands on him.

This is the first time Luke has told of miraculous wonders done by anyone other than the apostles.

÷Acts 6:9
Acts 6:9

Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue -- This verse seems to describe men from three different synagogues. The Jews from these locations would be describes at Grecian (Hellenists) by the local Jews.

of the Freedmen (as it was called), [Libertines; KJV] -- Chrysostom explains them as "freedmen of the Romans" thought to have been former prisoners or slaves of Romans who were now free men. This would be a Greek-speaking synagogue.

and of the Cyre'nians, -- Men from the region around Cyrene, a city in northern Africa. The man who bore Jesus' cross (Matthew 27.32) was from this place.

Later, disciples from Cyrene had a part in the spread of the gospel and the building of the church at Antioch (Acts 11:20), which became a great center of mission work.

[We could speculate and wonder if Simon of Cyrene and his family had a part in this work at Antioch (Mark 15:21; Romans 16:13]

and of the Alexandrians, -- Two-thirds (100,000) of the population of this Egyptian coastal city were Jews. It was a scholarly city where the Greek translation (the Septuagint, or LXX) of the Hebrew scriptures had been made and which was very frequently quoted by the New Testament writers.

and of those from Cili'cia -- This was a province in SE Asia Minor, on the seacoast, to the north of Cyprus. The capital of this province was Tarsus, the native place of Paul, Acts 9:11. As Paul was of this place, and doubtlessly belonged to this synagogue, it is probable that he was one of those who was engaged in this dispute with Stephen. Compare Acts 7:58.

and Asia, -- A Roman province in the west of Asia Minor (today Turkey). The great city of Ephesus was located on the west coast of this province.

arose [rose up] -- Some men of these synagogues began to actively oppose Stephen's successful ministry. There must be a lot more involved in this than there appears on the surface. Stephen may have entered each of these synagogues with his preaching and teaching.

and disputed [argued] with Stephen. -- Stephen was a Hellenistic Jewish-Christian disputing with Hellenistic Jews. These were most likely the very Grecian synagogues where he himself formerly worshiped and he must have known some of the men personally.

The word translated "disputing" is the same word that is used frequently of the questionings of the Pharisees (Mark 8:11), and the scribes (Mark 9:14), with Jesus and His disciples. Stephen no doubt focused on such themes as the death and Resurrection of Jesus, and the OT evidence to Him as the Messiah.

÷Acts 6:10

Acts 6:10

But they could not withstand -- The Greek is very forceful, and literally reads, "They had no strength to withstand." They there not able to meet his logical arguments nor to give mundane reason for the miracles which he did. When failing to do that, they worked on the emotions of the people Acts 6:12 ("stirred up the people") and met Stephen with violence as is often the case.

the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. -- Whether this is his own wisdom and spirit or something supplied by the Holy Spirit we cannot be sure. But the power and effect of his efforts could not be matched. It probably is an indication that Stephen spoke inspired by the Holy Spirit. If so, no wonder the Jews in the synagogue were not able to answer his arguments.

:Acts 6:11
Acts 6:11

Then they secretly instigated men, -- KJV "Suborned men;" NASB "secretly induced"; ESV "secretly instigated;" NIV "secretly persuaded." Webster, "1. to procure privately or unlawfully, as -- by bribery to commit some crime." The KJV used the word "suborn" which means *to provide*, but nearly always used in a bad sense. *Subornation* of perjury is the legal phrase for procuring a person who will take a false oath. The Greek word is **G5260**, *hupoballo*.

Since Stephen's opponents cannot counter the wisdom he has been given by the Spirit, they resort to deceit and slander.

who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." -- Unable to prevail over Stephen in open debate, his enemies resorted to deceit and conspiracy. They bribed men to be false witnesses. As with Jesus (Matthew 26:59-61), they recruited false witnesses to spread lies about Stephen. The charges were serious, since blasphemy was punishable by death (Leviticus 24:16).

Against Moses -- Probably Stephen was preaching the truth of Colossians 2:14 and Ephesians 2:15 and the very teaching of Christ as he warned of the coming destruction of the temple, Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21.

and God. -- Blasphemous words against Moses and against God Was the construction which these witnesses put upon language which had probably been uttered by Stephen in the same way as Christ had said (John 4:21), "The time cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father."

:Acts 6:12
Acts 6:12

And they stirred up the people -- When not able to meet the logical arguments of Stephen Acts 6:10, the opposition turned to arouse the emotions of the people.

When told that the glory of the Temple was spoken against, the common people would be readily roused, for the Temple was the object of great admiration and pride, as we can see from the words of Christ's disciples (Matthew 24:1).

and the elders and the scribes, -- By means of the false accusations and working upon the feelings of the people and synagogue leaders they obtained permission to arrest Stephen and bring him before the Sanhedrin.

and they came upon him -- A mob came up on Stephen as the people come upon Jesus at Nazareth (Luke 4:29; Luke 20:1-2), and seized him.

and seized him and brought him before the council, -- The council would be the Sanhedrin, the supreme court. We visualize the semi-circle of this court with Stephen in the center and the mob behind him hurling their accusations to the court.

:Acts 6:13
Acts 6:13

and set up false witnesses -- The men who were "put forward" were the "suborned men" of Acts 6:11. We are reminded of Jesus' own trial and words in Matthew 5:11-12; Matthew 26:59.

who said, "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place -- Placing Stephen before the Sanhedrin creates a more formal juridical setting.

this holy place-- the Sanhedrim sat in one of the chambers of the Temple, called Gazith.

speak against this holy place and the law -- Stephen seems to have been preaching the message Christ gave in Matthew 24:2; Mark 13:1-2; John 4:21; Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 10:9-10.

The false witnesses rendered a perverted turn to the words of Stephen. We can see from the character of Stephen's defence in the next chapter that he must have been heard to declare that the worship of God was no longer to be restricted as it had been to the Temple at Jerusalem. (John 4:21; John 2:21)

÷Acts 6:14
Acts 6:14

for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place, -- The witnesses twist Stephen's words about Jesus and His work. Jesus never claimed He would destroy the temple (compare John 2:19-21); He did, however, predict its destruction (Matthew 24:2; Mark 13:1-2), which took place in AD 70.

and will change the customs which Moses delivered to us." -- Jesus never claimed to overturn the law, but He made it clear that He came to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17).

If by "customs" they mean the ceremonial rites and observances – sacrifices, festivals, clean and unclean meats, etc. then there was to be a change in the New Covenant age. (Hebrews 10:9-10).

÷Acts 6:15
Acts 6:15

And gazing at him, -- "Looking steadfastly," "fixing their gaze," "fastening their eyes." The Sanhedrin members looked intently at Stephen. With this look, they seemed to be asking, "What do you have to say for yourself in answer to these charges?"

all who sat in the council -- One wonders if Paul was there?Apparently so. He seems to bear the responsibility of pressing the charges against Stephen (Acts 7:58; see the note at 1 Timothy 1:15)

saw that his face was like the face of an angel. -- How does one know what the face of an angel looks like? Perhaps Exodus 34:29-35 came to their disturbed memory. (2 Corinthians 3:7 ff)

What was Stephen's appearance? Peaceful, serene, unruffled composure, reflecting the presence of God? He must have looked like one who was in the presence of the Lord. (cf. Acts 7:55-56).

Stephen: The Angel-Faced Man

1. Sees heavenly things - Acts 7:56

2. Says heavenly things - Acts 7:59
3. Enters into Heaven's rest - Acts 7:60
   Revelation 14:13; Psalms 116:15

÷Acts 7:1
Acts 7:1

And the high priest said, "Is this [these things] so?" -- The high priest refers to the accusations concerning the temple and the law (see Acts 6:14 and note).

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Stephen's Speech Before the Sanhedrin

Difficulty #1 Acts 7:4
Difficulty #2 Acts 7:6
Difficulty #3 Acts 7:14
Difficulty #4 Acts 7:16
Difficulty #5 Acts 7:16

Five mistakes are charged to Stephen in the first sixteen verses of Acts 7. In the face of such accusations against Stephen's defense, it is important for us to keep in mind that Stephen is not accused of error by those to whom he was speaking. More importantly, obvious and defensible solutions can be supplied for every supposed error that Stephen made.

The only mistake Stephen made, from the point of view of the Sanhedrin, was the mistake of accusing them of killing Jesus. For this, they stoned him as a blasphemer.

÷Acts 7:2
Acts 7:2

And Stephen said: "Brethren and fathers, hear me. -- Stephen's response does not seem to answer the high priest's question. Instead, he gave a masterful, detailed defense of the Christian faith from the OT and concluded by condemning the Jewish leaders for rejecting Jesus.

"Brethren -- "Brethren" perhaps shows that a crowd of bystanders lined the walls of the judgment hall. But "brethren and fathers" also is a proper way of addressing the judges, too.

It has been questioned whether Stephen spoke in Greek or Hebrew. It seems probable that Stephen, as a Hellenistic Jew, spoke in Greek, which seems to be borne out by the quotations of Scripture being from the LXX. However, Meyer and others think he spoke in Hebrew, for every Jew would be able to speak this language also.

The God of glory -- A not very common expression (see Psalms 29:3), but probably chosen designedly as an introduction to this discourse, which deals with the several stages of God's manifestation of Himself. The term is applied (John 1:14) to the incarnate Word; "we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father."

Addressing "the God of Glory" indicates that Stephen wishes in no way to "blaspheme" the One True Living God.

appeared to our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopota'mia, -- "Mesopotamia" means "between the rivers:, that is, between the Tigris and Euphrates river. The ancestral home of Abraham is called "Ur of the Chaldees" (Genesis 11:31; Acts 7:4).

before he lived in Haran, -- Genesis 11:31-32 – Genesis 12:1 seems to indicate Abram reached Haran before God spoke to him. The Genesis account, however, does not seem to require a strict chronological ordering between Genesis 11 and Genesis 12. Genesis 11 may serve as an overview or background to the events in Genesis 12, and a call out of Ur is implied.

÷Acts 7:3
Acts 7:3

and said to him, 'Depart from your land and from your kindred -- This is found in Genesis 12:1. See also Genesis 15:7 which implies a command given for the first removal, cf. Nehemiah 9:7.

Joshua's words, many years later, (Joshua 24:2) tell us why God wanted Abraham to leave his relatives behind. God wanted Abraham to get away from the influence of idolatrous surroundings.

and go into the land which I will show you.' -- As Abraham journeyed he did not know where he end up, but followed God's leading on faith (Hebrews 11:8).

÷Acts 7:4
Acts 7:4

Then he departed from the land of the Chalde'ans, -- This is where Abraham's original home city of Ur was located (Genesis 11:28, Genesis 11:31; Genesis 15:7; Nehemiah 9:7).

and lived in Haran. -- Genesis 11:31-32; Genesis 12:1. The Genesis account, however, does not seem to require a strict chronological ordering between Genesis 11 and Genesis 12. Genesis 11 may serve as an overview or background to the events in Genesis 12.

And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living; -- Abraham was seventy-five when he left Haran (Genesis 12:4); and Terah lived to be 205 (Genesis 11:32). The best solution to this apparent difficulty is that Abraham was not Terah's firstborn son, but was mentioned first (Genesis 11:26) because he was most prominent. Abraham, then, would have been born when Terah was 130.

Difficulty #1

Terah was 205 yrs old when he died in Haran Genesis 11:32; - And Genesis 12:4 says that Abraham was 75 yrs old when he left Haran. Genesis 11:26; Genesis 11:31; Terah 70 yrs when his first son was born, but Abraham was not his firstborn but apparently Haran. (Remember that Lot was the son of Haran who had died Genesis 11:27-28 and Abraham took him under his wing.)

÷Acts 7:5
Acts 7:5

yet he gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot's length, -- This proverbial expression echos the language of Deuteronomy 2:5 ("foot's length"), Stephen points out that Abraham received no land at this point but only a promise.

Abraham led a nomadic life, and this passage means that he did not himself receive a permanent possession or residence in that land (Canaan). The only land which he owned was a field which he purchased of the children of Heth for a burial place called the Cave of Machpelah. This apparent exception was not a real exception. The field and cave were purchased for a special purpose, for use after this earthly life was over.

but promised to give it to him in possession and to his posterity after him, -- Instead of granting the land to Abram to possess personally, God fulfills the promise in his descendants (Genesis 12:7; Genesis 13:14-15; Genesis 17:8; (Genesis 48:4) compare Acts 3:25-26).

though he had no child. -- The land was promised to Abraham's children, when at the time he had none. Isaac was not born until Abraham was 99 years old.

÷Acts 7:6
Acts 7:6

And God spoke to this effect, that his posterity would be aliens in a land belonging to others, -- Abraham and Isaac were aliens in Canaan, without owning any land, long before Moses led them to the promised land.

who would enslave them and ill-treat them four hundred years. -- Verses 6 and 7 are taken from Genesis 15:13-14 in the LXX, (The Septuagint, the Greek OT which was used by the Hellenist Jews.)

four hundred years. -- Stephen in quoting Genesis 15:13-14 is here alleged to be in contradiction to Paul (Galatians 3:17) when he seems to set the length of the bondage in Egypt at 400 years. The captivity in Egypt was but 215 years in duration, but the years of the Hebrews in Canaan when the promises were made (before the sojourn in Egypt) is probably alluded to by Paul.

Difficulty #2
Four hundred years -- . Stephen is quoting Genesis 15:13-14; We read of 430 years in Galatians 3:17; Exodus 12:40. [Read Genesis 11]

This seems in conflict with the evidence that the actual captivity in Egypt was 215 years. Josephus says the Israelites left Egypt 430 years after the time the promise was given to Abraham when he came into the land of Canaan to the Exodus, but 215 years after Jacob moved to Egypt. See Reese p. 307

÷Acts 7:7
Acts 7:7

'But I will judge the nation which they serve,' -- God is promising Abraham that in due time He would punish the Egyptians. And just as God said, the Egyptians were judged by the plagues and the overthrow at the Red Sea.

said God, -- Stephen combines the promise to Abraham in Genesis 15:16 along with a free rendering of the sign given to Moses (Exodus 3:12) which referred not to Canaan but to Horeb.

'and after -- After the Egyptians are punished.

that they shall come out and worship me in this place.' -- Stephen here may be alluding to Exodus 3:12, where God want the Israelites to come to Mt. Sinai to worship and receive the Law, but some think "this place" is referring to the Temple at Jerusalem.

It may be considered that Stephen's point is that just as God was worshiped at Mt Sinai, He is not restricted to the Temple and Jerusalem! (CBSC)

÷Acts 7:8
Acts 7:8

And he gave him the covenant of circumcision. -- In the OT circumcision was the sign that Abraham's descendants were God's chosen nation. It demonstrated God's commitment to keep His promises to Abraham's family (Genesis 17:1-14; Romans 4:10-17).

The practice of circumcision is mentioned in a speech again only in Acts 21:21, in an accusation against Paul.

And so Abraham became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day; -- Genesis 21:4.

and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs. -- The twelve sons of Jacob, who became the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel (Genesis 35:22-26).

÷Acts 7:9
Acts 7:9

"And the patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, -- This account is found in Genesis 37:11, Genesis 37:28;

Stephen is trying to show that the Jewish people and their leaders have often rejected God's chosen leader (cf. Moses in Acts 7:35).

sold him into Egypt; -- Joseph's brothers sold him to Midianite traders who took him to Egypt to sell as a slave. Genesis 37:28; Genesis 45:4.

Like Joseph, Jesus' brethren rejected and literally sold Him for the price of a slave. Nevertheless, God was with Joseph, and Jesus. God exalted Joseph under Pharaoh, and placed him in authority over his domain. God had done the same with Jesus (Ephesians 1:22).

but God was with him, -- Stephen is likely suggesting a parallel between Joseph's brothers' rejection of him (Genesis 37:11) and the religious leaders' rejection of Jesus and His followers (compare Acts 5:17-18). He is also implying that God is with the Church, just as He was with Joseph, rather than the religious leaders.

÷Acts 7:10
Acts 7:10

and rescued him out of all his afflictions, -- See Genesis 41:37-45. God saw to it that Joseph was restored from prison and humiliation to a place of freedom and service. The afflictions did not derail God's plans. The afflictions the Church was suffering from the Sanhedrin would not derail them either.

and gave him favor and wisdom before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, -- Joseph's wisdom was evidenced not only in the interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams, but in his administration of surplus food stores in preparation for the coming famine.

who made him governor over Egypt and over all his household. -- Joseph's position was second in all of Egypt, and in addition he had rule over the court (house) of Pharaoh. Genesis 41:41.

÷Acts 7:11
Acts 7:11

Now there came a famine throughout all Egypt and Canaan, -- See Genesis 41:54-55; Genesis 42:5. The area where the patriarchs lived, as a whole, is called "Canaan," and the people Canaanites.

and great affliction, -- While "great suffering" (*thlipsis, G2347*) fell upon all of Canaan, including the patriarchs, God was with Joseph (Acts 7:9) and by inference, He was not with the patriarchs.

and our fathers -- The patriarchs (Acts 7:9) are now called "our fathers," and even they could not find food.

could find no food [sustenance]. -- The noun in Greek (*chortasma*, G5527) is generally used of "food" for cattle rather than men. See LXX. Genesis 24:25; Genesis 24:32. But in the history of a famine, the sufferings of the people are most noticed, and it also affects the supplies of cattle-food, and the one word is used to embrace it all.

÷Acts 7:12
Acts 7:12

But when Jacob heard -- See Genesis 42:1-3. . At this point, Stephen introduces a second character into the story, Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, who still lived in the land of Canaan.

that there was grain in Egypt, -- The "grain" would be wheat or barley, not "corn" as in the KJV.

he sent forth our fathers the first time. -- On the first visit, Jacob and Benjamin, did not make the trip. The scene will quickly pass from the "first" visit to the "second".

÷Acts 7:13
Acts 7:13

And at the second visit Joseph made himself known to his brothers, -- The "second visit" speaks of the second time the son of Jacob went to Egypt to buy food.

On this visit they took Benjamin, the youngest son, with them. Joseph controlled the distribution of the grain, and hid a cup in Benjamin's sack. The brothers were finally told by Joseph who he was, and then they recognized him.

and Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh. -- By "Joseph's family" it means his relatives, his family background, became known to Pharaoh.

÷Acts 7:14
Acts 7:14

And Joseph sent and called to him Jacob his father -- Pharaoh assisted Joseph in making arrangements to bring his father and his relatives into Egypt.

and all his kindred, seventy-five souls; -- 1) Some critics think Stephen is likely given an approximation (Genesis 46:26-27 as well as Moses in Exodus 1:5; Deuteronomy 10:22. This would seem to be the number of people invited to live in Egypt.

2) It should be pointed out again Stephen is quoting from the Septuagint (LXX) which reads "seventy-five."

3) There are other explanations made for the differences in these Biblical numbers believing the additional five people being Joseph's descendant born in Egypt. (Genesis 46:26-27). Or, some of Jacob's sons wives (and Jacob himself) could be included in one of the counts while the other count is only "descendants."

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Difficulty #3
The LXX reads 75 souls which Stephen is quoting. Whereas Genesis 46:26-27 lists 66 and 70 respectively.
Genesis 46:20 give also the names of 2 sons of Manassah 2 sons of Ephraim and 1 grandson.

÷Acts 7:15
Acts 7:15

and Jacob went down into Egypt. -- Now the whole race whom God had chosen to Himself was in Egypt, away from the land of promise. They remained there for a long period, yet God was with them in their exile, and His worship was preserved for the whole time. This seems the point which Stephen is emphasizing by so frequent a repetition of the words “into Egypt.”

And he died, himself and our fathers, -- Joseph, Jacob and his sons who were the heads of their families (tribes) died in Egypt.

÷Acts 7:16
Acts 7:16

and they -- The "they" is reference to "our fathers" the patriarchs, or the sons of Jacob.

were carried back to Shechem -- Nothing in the scriptures tell us of the transportation of the bodies of the patriarchs to Canaan. Josephus (*Antiq*. ii. 8. 2) says "the posterity and sons of these men, after some time, carried their bodies and buried them at Hebron."

In the discussion of Exodus 13:19, *Carry up my bones away hence with you*, it is said (*Mechilta*, ed. Weiss, 1865, Vienna, 8vo p. 30) that the bodies of the patriarchs were carried out of Egypt with the returning Israelites, and it is argued that this is implied in the expression *with you*, which Moses quotes as uttered by Joseph, who must have known that his brethren to whom he was speaking would all be dead before the Exodus. Therefore *with you* could only be used if their bodies were to be transported as well as his own.

and laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem. -- (Genesis 33:19, Genesis 50:25; Joshua 24:32).

Abraham and Sarah were buried in the cave of the field of Machpelah at Hebron (Genesis 23:19; Genesis 25:9-10)

The book of Joshua (Joshua 24:32) tell us of the burial of the bones of Joseph at Shechem.

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Difficulty #4
It appears ***all*** the patriarchs were buried in Canaan. See Reese, page 311. We know that ***Jacob*** was buried at Machpelah, Genesis 50:13

Difficultly #5
Who bought which tomb?
Genesis 33:19 and Joshua 24:32 Shechem tomb bought by Jacob.
Genesis 12:6 Abraham lived their first.

÷Acts 7:17
Acts 7:17

Acts 7:17-19 summarizes Exodus 1:7-22.

"But as the time of the promise drew near, -- Time for the promise fulfillment. The fathers "all died in faith" not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off (Hebrews 11:13).

which God had granted [assured] to Abraham, -- God had given several promises to Abraham concerning the land of Israel and the time for it fulfillment was coming.

the people grew and multiplied in Egypt -- The number of those who came out of Egypt (Exodus 12:37) was "six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children."

÷Acts 7:18
Acts 7:18

till there arose over Egypt another king -- "Another" is *heteros*, "different," rather than *allos*, "another of the same kind."

who had not known Joseph. -- Exodus 1:8. The Hyksos rulers, sometimes called "shepherd kings," generally looked upon the children of Israel with sympathy and favor. But a Pharaoh who arose who did not.

Those who hold to a 1447 BC date for the Exodus identify the Pharaoh as being Ahmes (sometimes spelled Ames), the first king of the 18th dynasty. This man came to power in 1580 BC. For the record, Thotmes I, 1539-1514 BC, was the Pharaoh when Moses was born.

One theory is to relate this Egyptian king (one from the XIX dynasty, 1290 BC). to the first native Egyptian dynasty who overthrew the Hyksos (Semitic) rulers of Egypt. This would explain the use of *heteros* in v. 18. A native Egyptian would not want Semites, like the Hebrews, in large numbers in his territory, fearing another invasion like the Hyksos.

The chronology of the Bible however favors the identification of Ahmes as the Pharaoh.

:Acts 7:19
Acts 7:19

He dealt craftily with our race -- Including subjecting them to slavery and the building of cities. Beside the hard tasks put upon the people according to the record in Exodus, Josephus adds (*Antiq*. ii. 9. 1) that the Egyptians "made them to cut a great many channels for the river, and set them to build pyramids, forced them to learn all sorts of mechanical arts and to accustom themselves to hard labour."

and forced our fathers to expose their infants, -- Only the male babies were so exposed, Exodus 1:15-22.

The other reading is "that ***he*** should expose their infants," and the idea is that the infants were killed by the Egyptians acting as agents of Pharaoh.

that they might not be kept alive. -- The words are a description of what the Egyptian king did in his tyranny (Exodus 1:22). He wanted to diminish the male population of the Israelites lest they join in a rebellion again the Pharaoh.

:Acts 7:20
Acts 7:20

At this time Moses was born, and was beautiful before God. -- The last phrase is literally "fair unto (*before*;, i.e. in the sight of) God." This is a Hebrew mode of expressing a high degree of any quality.

And he was brought up [nourished] for three months in his father's house; -- Moses was hidden at home for three months, in defiance of the new Pharaoh's decree.

:Acts 7:21
Acts 7:21

and when he was exposed, -- The record in Exodus is that Moses was put in a basket of rushes which had been made watertight and set afloat on the Nile River near the place where Pharaoh's daughter was known to come to bathe.

Pharaoh's daughter adopted him -- When the daughter of Pharaoh, accompanied by some of her handmaidens, came to bathe in the river, Moses' sister was standing at a distance waiting to see what would happen. The maidens found the baby boy in the rushes. The infant was presented to Pharaoh's daughter, and she decided on the spot to adopt him. Moses' sister offered to find a nurse and the child's own mother was engaged to nurse the baby.

and brought him up as her own son. -- She treated Moses as her own son. She herself could never become ruler of Egypt, but her oldest son (Moses in this case) would be in line for the throne.

÷Acts 7:22
Acts 7:22

And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, -- At this time the Egyptians had advanced markedly in the study of astrology, medicine, mathematics, and music.

Josephus tells of Moses leading the Egyptians (the lower kingdom) against a war with the kingdom of Ethiopia (upper Egypt). And creating peace with that kingdom by marrying the daughter of the king.

He also relates a tradition how Moses protected the land of Egypt against serpents that infected the country by transporting large numbers of ibis into Egypt (the ibis being a bird that feeds on serpents).

and he was mighty in his words and deeds. -- Moses was quite distinguished in Egypt before he ever fled to Midian or was called to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt.

÷Acts 7:23
Acts 7:23

Acts 7:23-29 summarizes and interprets Exodus 2:11-15

"When he was forty years old, -- While the OT does not specify Moses' age, Stephen is likely referring to the point at which Moses reached adult maturity (see Exodus 2:11).

Moses' life may be divided into three forty-year periods. 1) The first forty years encompassed his birth and life in Pharaoh's court; 2) the second his exile in Midian (Acts 7:29-30); 3) and the third revolved around the events of the Exodus and the years of Israel's wilderness wandering (Acts 7:36).

it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the sons of Israel. -- Stephen implies that at age forty Moses though he was ready to act on behalf of and lead the Israelites.

"Visit" has the connotation of "helping" or "relieving," as it does elsewhere in the New Testament (cf. Matthew 25:36; Luke 1:68; James 1:27). The Israelites were in the land of Goshen at

this time, and some think Moses went with the purpose in mind of delivering them from their oppressive bondage on his own (i.e. without God's leading).

÷Acts 7:24
Acts 7:24

And seeing one of them being wronged, -- The "unjust treatment" the Israelite was suffering was that the Egyptian taskmaster was beating the Hebrew (Exodus 2:11).

he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking the Egyptian. -- Moses killed the Egyptian, and buried his body in the sand Exodus 2:12. It was a violent act of revenge.

÷Acts 7:25
Acts 7:25

He supposed that his brethren understood that God was giving them deliverance by his hand, -- This verse seems to be Stephen's understanding of a Jewish tradition that is not stated in Exodus.

but they did not understand. -- Stephen seems to be making a point that just as the Israelites didn't understand that a great deliverer (Moses) had been sent to them, the Jewish leaders of Stephen's day also didn't understand the Greater Deliverer that God had sent to them; instead they had rejected Jesus, when they should have risen up and followed Him!

÷Acts 7:26
Acts 7:26

And on the following day he appeared to them as they were quarreling -- The two men were Hebrews. According to Exodus 2:13, the two Hebrews were fighting with each other when Moses came upon the scene.

and would have reconciled them, -- Moses intercedes with the purpose to get them to stop fighting and be reconciled.

saying, 'Men, you are brethren, why do you wrong each other?' -- Moses seems surprised that two men who were both Hebrews would be fighting each other. Moses probably had strong words particularly with the who was wronging his neighbor (Acts 7:27).

÷Acts 7:27
Acts 7:27

But the man who was wronging his neighbor thrust him aside, -- Stephen seems to picture Moses stepping in between the two men to stop the fight, but then being pushed aside. The one at fault rejected all interference from Moses and wanted to finish what he had started.

saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? -- The man at fault rejects Moses as an arbitrator or someone having a right to settle differences. His attitude was, "This is none of your business!"

÷Acts 7:28
Acts 7:28

Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?' -- One wonders if the man who started the fight was the one who had been rescued on the previous day? Had the Hebrew man defended spread the news of his rescue at the hands of Moses?

÷Acts 7:29
Acts 7:29

At this retort Moses fled, -- According to Exodus 2:14-15, Moses was afraid because others had discovered he was the one who murdered an Egyptian, and Pharaoh was now seeking to kill him. Apparently Pharaoh viewed Moses as the leader of a Hebrew rebellion.

Josephus (*Antiq*. ii. 11. 1) says that many Egyptian leaders were jealous of Moses, and told Pharaoh "that he would raise a sedition, and bring innovations" into the land. In consequence of the plots against him, because of these suspicions, Moses fled away secretly.

and became an exile in the land of Mid'ian, -- Midian was a region in the Arabian Peninsula south of the Dead Sea and east of the Red Sea.

The descendants of Midian, the fourth son of Abraham and Keturah (Genesis 25:1-2), occupied a considerable territory, some 300 miles along the Eastern shore of the Red Sea, and stretching deep into the interior. They were a nomadic people, and had very few towns.

where he became the father of two sons. -- Moses had two sons in the land of Midian, Gershom and Eliezer; their mother was Zipporah the daughter of Jethro (also named Reuel; see Exodus 18:2-4).

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Stephen was being charged with blaspheming Moses, so he refutes the charge by reverently rehearsing the history of Moses. He may be inferring that it is the Sanhedrin who is rejecting the words of Moses, who pointed to Christ, Acts 7:37-39.

÷Acts 7:30
Acts 7:30

"Now when forty years had passed, -- Moses would now be about eighty year old, the age when he went to Pharaoh to plea for Israel (Exodus 7:7).

an angel appeared to him -- Literally, a "messenger of Yahweh" who, in context, turns out to be the Lord Himself talking to Moses.

Lenski and other commentators think that the angel who appeared to Moses was Jesus Christ in angelic form. In many of the OT passages this messenger from God is called "the angel of Yahweh."

Other evidence is that it was God the Father Himself or another angel designated to be His messenger. One would expect the Greek to read "***the*** angel." Any angel commissioned by God to do a special task could be designated by Bible writers as "an angel of Yahweh.

in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, -- There is serious doubt about the real location of this site. The traditional site of Mt. Sinai was not established until *Pilgrimage of Silvia*, written about AD 385. This tradition has Mt. Sinai located in the southern part of what is now designated as the Sinai peninsular.

However, Midia is east of the Red Sea (the Gulf of Aqaba) and there is an equally old tradition for it's location in mountains in that area. Among the Arabs there is a mountain called, "The Mountain of Moses" in the Midian region.

in a flame of fire in a bush. -- The bush does not appear to be burning up, but there is a flame in a bush. The Hebrew word *seneh* is used for a species of thorny acacia, or any prickly shrub.

÷Acts 7:31
Acts 7:31

In Acts 7:31-34 we have in substance given in Exodus 3:2-10.

When Moses saw it he wondered at the sight; -- It would be amazing to see a sight like this in the desert, a bush seeming to burn, but not burning up.

and as he drew near to look, -- He approached the phenomena "to examine and contemplate" this spectacle more closely.

the voice of the Lord came, -- Moses did not see God; He merely heard His voice. Stephen's speech agrees with Exodus 3:4, where the voice is attributed to the Lord, while the visible manifestation was that of an angel of the Lord.

÷Acts 7:32
Acts 7:32

'I am the God of your fathers, -- (Exodus 3:15). The "fathers" here would be a reference to the patriarchs, probably going back to Noah and Adam since He next mentions Abraham and his descendants.

The word "fathers" is singular, while in every other occurrence of the phrase it is plural. Some think God is speaking of Moses' real slave father.

the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob.' -- This language ties Moses' calling to the promise to Abraham with which Stephen began his speech (Acts 7:2; compare Exodus 3:6).

And Moses trembled and did not dare to look. -- It always is a fearful thing to stand in the presence of God. Moses looked no longer directly at the flaming bush, but lowering his eyes to the ground in front of him he showed his reverence and subjection to the voice.

÷Acts 7:33
Acts 7:33

And the Lord said to him, 'Take off the shoes [sandals] from your feet, -- To take off one's shoes or sandals was an act of respect and reverence. The Jewish priests were barefoot in the tabernacle and temple, lest anything should have attached itself to their sandals that would defile the holy places.

Even today, especially in the East, it is the custom to remove one's shoes before entering the living area of one's home. Also the Moslem mosques are not entered till the worshiper has removed his shoes.

for the place where you are standing is holy ground. -- The ground was rendered sacred by God's presence.

The reference to "holy ground" is significant in the context of Stephen's speech. Identifying this place on Mount Sinai as "holy" relativizes the claims about "this holy place" that formed part of the charge against Stephen (Acts 6:13).

÷Acts 7:34
Acts 7:34

I have surely seen the ill-treatment of my people that are in Egypt -- See Exodus 3:7-8. The Hebrew in Exodus reads: "Seeing, I have seen." Repetition like this was the regular Hebrew method by which a thing was emphasized.

God is aware of what happens in His world, not only to whole nations, but to individuals. He had seen the cruel treatment the Israelites were receiving since the change in government had occurred.

and heard their groaning, -- God had heard the continual cries of pain and anguish the Israelites suffered from the oppression of Egypt.

and I have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt.' -- YHWH heard their prayers, saw the affliction, and responded. In this case, God was going into action, and shortly there would be a deliverance of His people from Egypt. But notice His rescue was effected through human instrumentality. God sent a reluctant Moses. God has chosen to deal with humans through humans!

÷Acts 7:35
Acts 7:35

"This Moses whom they refused, -- Thus began Israel's long history of rejecting her God-sent deliverers (cf. Matthew 21:33-46; Matthew 23:37).

The language here echoes Peter's speech about Jesus (Acts 2:32, Acts 2:36). Stephen imitates Peter's logic. Israel has consistently misjudged and rejected Yahweh's chosen leaders; in doing so, they fought against Yahweh. Rejecting Jesus as Messiah is the ultimate example of this pattern.

saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?' -- (See note on Acts 7:27). This echos the rejection of Moses.

Stephen here begins to point out how in old time the people had rejected Moses, though he had the witness of God that his commission was Divine, that he may shew his hearers how they are acting in the same manner toward Jesus.

God sent as both ruler and deliverer -- Stephen says, God sent back the rejected Moses to be a ruler and deliverer. He leaves his audience to draw the conclusion that what God had done in the case of Moses, he would also do in the case of the prophet whom Moses had foretold as to be like himself.

by the hand of the angel that appeared to him in the bush. -- "The hand of the angel" indicate that divine power was involved in their deliverance. See Acts 4:30; Acts 11:21. Divine power, which the Jewish leaders were trying to ignore.

÷Acts 7:36
Acts 7:36

He led them out, -- Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt (Exodus 8:19) after Pharaoh had hardened his heart multiple times.

having performed wonders and signs in Egypt -- This has reference to the ten plagues that God visited upon Egypt. The apostles' works by the Spirit parallel Moses' miracles. Acts 5:12).

and at the Red Sea, -- The parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:1-31) revealed the great power of god.

and in the wilderness for forty years. -- Moses continued to show God's presence with miracles during the wilderness wandering with the miraculous provision of water (Exodus 17:1-7), the mana, and the quail.

÷Acts 7:37
Acts 7:37

This is the Moses who said to the Israelites, -- If the Jews had really felt the reverence they professed toward Moses, they would have gladly welcomed the Prophet to whom Moses directed their attention. (Deuteronomy 18:15-18).

'God will raise up for you a prophet from your brethren as he raised me up.' -- The prophecy is in Deuteronomy 18:15, and has been already quoted by Peter (Acts 3:22) as referring ultimately to the Messiah. Its quotation to those who had rejected Jesus is the key-note of what is more openly expressed in Acts 7:51, "as your fathers did, so do ye."

÷Acts 7:38
Acts 7:38

This is -- "This" (Greek *houtos estin*) with the articular adjectival participle in verses 37 and 38 is an intensified form of the demonstrative pronouns translated "this" in verse 35 (*touton*) and verse 36 (*houtos*). Stephen clearly respected Moses, contrary to the charge against him.

he who was in the congregation in the wilderness -- "Congregation" (cf. Exodus 12:3, Exodus 12:6, Exodus 12:19, Exodus 12:47; Exodus 16:1-2, Exodus 16:9-10; Exodus 17:1; Exodus 35:1; Leviticus 4:13; Leviticus 16:5; Numbers 1:2; Numbers 8:9; Numbers 13:26; Numbers 14:2; Joshua 18:1).

with the angel -- Most likely this is the Angel of the Lord (Acts 7:30; Acts 7:35) and it involved a multitude of angels (cf. Deuteronomy 33:3; Galatians 3:19; Hebrews 2:2).

who spoke to him at Mount Sinai, -- Moses' unique position as mediator between God and the Israelites is seen in God's direct revelation of His will to Moses at Sinai (Exodus 20–31; Galatians 3:19)

and with our fathers; -- Jewish tradition says that the whole world was present at Sinai. Thus *Midrash Rabbah* on Exodus chapter 28 reads: "Whatever the prophets were to utter in prophecy in every generation they received from Mount Sinai," and presently after, commenting on the words of Moses (Deuteronomy 29:15), *Him that is not here with us this day*, it is said, "These are the souls which were yet to be created."

and he received living oracles to give to us. -- Stephen noted that Moses himself had predicted that a Prophet like himself would appear (cf. Acts 3:22). Therefore, the Jews should not have concluded that the Mosaic Law was the end of God's revelation to them. The fact that Stephen spoke of the Mosaic Law as "living words" suggests that he viewed it more in its revelatory than in its regulatory aspect.

Moses is thus shown to have been a mediator (see Galatians 3:19), and thus to have prefigured the mediator of a better covenant (Hebrews 8:6) and of the New Testament (Hebrews 9:15), even Jesus (Hebrews 12:24).

living oracles -- The same word as in Acts 7:38; Romans 3:2; Hebrews 5:12; 1 Peter 4:11. The oracles are called *living*, just as "the word of God" is called *living* [quick] (Hebrews 4:12).

:Acts 7:39
Acts 7:39

Our fathers refused to obey him, -- Stephen here is likely recounting what we can read in Exodus 32:1-23. While Moses is up on the Mountain for days longer than the Hebrews expected him to be gone, they turned to Aaron to be their leader. They rejected Moses as their leader. The Hebrews rejected Moses then, Stephen implies, just as the Sanhedrin was rejecting Christ now.

but thrust him aside, -- While probably not truly anxious to go back to a life of servitude; but they did yearn for some of the creature comforts they had known.

Even the idolatry of the Egyptians had a certain influence over the morals and habits of the Hebrews. Not knowing how to worship Yahweh aright, and being familiar with all the gods of Egypt, they imitated the idolatries of the Egyptians.

and in their hearts they turned to Egypt, -- The nature of the people's rebellious hearts was seen in their repeated tendency; when things became difficult in the wilderness, they showed their desire to return to slavery in Egypt (e.g., Exodus 16:3; Exodus 17:3; Numbers 11:5; Numbers 14:2-3).

÷Acts 7:40
Acts 7:40

saying to Aaron, 'Make for us gods -- Either a man-made representation of the true God (Exodus 32:1-5) which was forbidden (Exodus 20:4). (Quoted from Exodus 32:1, Exodus 32:23.) Or a likeness of one of the gods they were familiar with in Egypt. It later turned into fertility worship.

to go before us; -- "To go before us" seems to reflect the pagan practice of carrying their idols in the forefront of their army's marching columns.

as for this Moses who led us out from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' -- Moses was on the mountain forty days. The people thought perhaps he was dead, and so they would get no further guidance from him.

÷Acts 7:41
Acts 7:41

And they made a calf in those days, -- Exodus 32:1; Exodus 32:23. They constrained Aaron to make the idol. It was made from the golden earrings and ornaments which the people had brought from Egypt.

Just why they made a *golden* bull has been variously explained. Boles wrote that they made a "calf" of gold because they were accustomed to seeing the Egyptians worship the bull Apis at Memphis as a symbol of Osiris, the sun. The Egyptians had another sacred bull, Mnevis, at Heliopolis.

and offered a sacrifice to the idol -- Stephen interprets the golden calf as an idol and uses this historical event to introduce a quote from Amos 5, which implies that Israel, even as far back as the Exodus and Wilderness Wandering, was idolatrous and rebellious.

and rejoiced in the works of their hands. -- It was not the voice of them that shout for the victory, nor of them that cry for being overcome, but the *noise of them that sing* which Moses (Exodus 32:18) heard when he came down from the mount.

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WORKS - James 2:24, James 2:26, John 12:42, Galatians 5:6, Acts 10:34-35, Matthew 7:21, Hebrews 5:9.

Kinds of Works

1. Works of the flesh- Galatians 5:19-21
2. Our own works- Acts 7:41, 2 Timothy 1:9
3. Works of the law of Moses Galatians 2:16
4. Works of obedience- Acts 10:34-35, Luke 6:46, John 6:29.

÷Acts 7:42
Acts 7:42

But God turned and gave them over -- Yahweh turned His face away from them and allowed the people to continue the path they chose for themselves, giving them over to their idolatry.

to worship the host of heaven, -- God had warned the people through Moses that they must not turn away from exclusive devotion to Him and begin worshiping or trusting in heavenly bodies and

false deities like all the other nations did (Deuteronomy 4:19). The history of the nation proves that they frequently failed to heed His warning (e.g., 2 Kings 17:16; 2 Kings 21:3; Jeremiah 19:13).

Israel's idolatrous worship of the sun, moon, and stars began in the wilderness and lasted through the Babylonian captivity (cf. Deuteronomy 4:19; Deuteronomy 17:3; 2 Kings 17:16; 2 Kings 21:3-5; 2 Kings 23:4; 2 Chronicles 33:3-5; Jeremiah 8:2; Jeremiah 19:13; Zephaniah 1:5).

as it is written in the book of the prophets: -- This is a reference to the twelve minor prophets (Hosea to Malachi) being transmitted on one scroll, as seen among the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Stephen used language the people were use to. They counted all twelve as one book when speaking of the OT canon as having 22 books.

'Did you offer to me slain beasts and sacrifices, -- The quotation is from Amos 5:25-26. The Israelites kept up the form of Yahweh worship generally, but in their hearts they frequently forsook God and offered worship to idols.

forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? -- The round number "forty" is used here by Stephen, as in Numbers 14:33-34, for the exact 38 ½ years.

÷Acts 7:43
Acts 7:43

And you took -- In the Hebrew the word for "took up" is the word which is regularly used for "taking up" and "bearing" the ark of the covenant.

Here the unfaithful Israelites are pictures "taking up" the idol "tent" and "bearing" the idol along (in their march), which incidentally led them into the land of captivity, and not into the promise land!

up the tent [tabernacle] -- The religious leaders had accused Stephen, and Jesus, of threatening the temple (Acts 6:13), which was the permanent successor to the "tabernacle" (or tent) Yahweh had instructed them to build. (Exodus 26; compare Acts 7:44). Stephen reminds them that, by turning to the tabernacles of other gods, Israel has consistently failed to respond in obedience to the one true God.

of Moloch -- A pagan idol-god whose worship likely originated in Canaan and involved child sacrifice (as seen among the Moabites)(Leviticus 18:21; Leviticus 20:2-5).

and the star of the god Rephan, -- *Rephan*, is said to be the Egyptian name for Saturn, and may have been used as an equivalent for other names which are found nowhere else but in Amos. The whole idea of the passage is that the stars (astrology) were being worshipped, which illustrated Stephen's point that the Israelites were always forsaking the Living God.

the figures which you made to worship; -- The Israelites actually made for themselves little figurines (idols) to worship like the pagan people around them.

and I will remove you beyond Babylon.' -- Amos 5:27, which Stephen is quoting here, originally read "beyond Damascus," referring to the Assyrian deportation of the northern kingdom of Israel. In an interpretive move, Stephen refers to an exile "beyond Babylon," referring to the later deportation of Judah to Babylon. The reference to the exile of Judah may have been more relevant for Stephen's Jerusalem audience.

Both events were brought about by disloyalty to Yahweh. The prophecy embraced the judgment on the whole nation, north and south, summarizing their idolatrous history and its results.

÷Acts 7:44
Acts 7:44

In Acts 7:44-50 there is emphasis on the temple.

"Our fathers had the tent of witness in the wilderness, -- To counter the false charge that he blasphemed the temple (Acts 6:13-14), Stephen recounted its history to show his respect for it.

The tabernacle (tent) was the predecessor of the permament temple (Exodus 25:8-9; Exodus 25:40).

the ten of witness [testimony] -- Exodus 38:21. The contents of the ark were testimonies to God's rule and His authority over the people Israel.

The ark stored Aaron's rod, a pot of manna, and the tables of the Law. The ark, among the people, bore testimony to them that the One Almighty God was moving with them from place to place.

even as he who spoke to Moses directed him to make it, -- These detailed plans of the tabernacle were revealed to Moses on Mt. Sinai. The NT book of Hebrews talks about a heavenly tabernacle or sanctuary (cf. Hebrews 8:5-6; Hebrews 9:11; Hebrews 9:23) of which the earthly one was a copy.

according to the pattern that he had seen. -- While upon Mt. Sinai, Moses was shown a pattern, (like a blueprint) that he was to follow in constructing the tent (tabernacle.)

Since God Himself showed Moses the "pattern" to be followed, that was evidence that the tabernacle had God's sanction. Stephen is implying that he was not about to speak against that.

÷Acts 7:45
Acts 7:45

Our fathers -- Here Stephen means their ancestors who traveled with Moses in the wilderness.

in turn brought it in with Joshua when they dispossessed the nations -- Their fore-fathers brought the tabernacle with them when they crossed the Jordan River and conquered Jericho and the Canaanite nations.

which God thrust out before our fathers. -- God viewed the wickedness of the Canaanites and it was time of the Israelites to inherit the land God had promised Abraham. (Genesis 15:16).

Apparently one reason Abraham didn't get the land in his life time was the "iniquity of Amorites was not yet complete." The Israelites conquering the Canaan tribes was not only the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham, but it was a judgment upon the wickedness the people who lived there.

This ought to be a warning to any nation whose morality and life-style become an abomination to God, that judgment is coming.

So it was until the days of David, -- Stephen has described how Yahweh has accomplished His purposes and kept His promises, despite Israel's failings, through Abraham, Joseph, and Moses. Stephen now introduces David's role in the history of Israel.

÷Acts 7:46
Acts 7:46

who found favor in the sight of God -- It was David who found favor with God, and who is called "a man after God's own heart." (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22).

and asked leave to find a habitation for the God of Jacob. -- David wanted permission to build God a house (the temple) but instead God told David that He would build David a house (or dynasty), See the entire chapter 2 Samuel 7:1 ff. and the prophecy of Christ (2 Samuel 7:16) who would built the church (Matthew 16:18-19) and sit on the throne in heaven over His kingdom (Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33; Ephesians 1:22).

÷Acts 7:47
Acts 7:47

But it was Solomon who built a house for him. -- David did not get to build the temple for God as he wanted to, but God did show him the blueprint and David gathered up the supplies and materials for building it. Then it was David's son, Solomon who got to built the temple.

÷Acts 7:48
Acts 7:48

Yet the Most High -- This reference to God is also used in the LXX (Genesis 14:18-19, Genesis 14:22; Psalms 46:4) as well as in the writing of Philo (the great Jewish allegorist and apologist who resided in Alexandria, Egypt.)

does not dwell in houses made with hands; -- By the Jewish leaders placing so much emphasis on the temple as Yahweh's exclusive dwelling place, Israel actually shows disrespect for Solomon who built it. For Solomon recognized himself at the dedication of the temple, that no physical building contain Yahweh, the Lord of heaven and earth (1 Kings 8:27; 2 Chronicles 2:6).

as the prophet says, -- Stephen referred to Isaiah as "the prophet." As a prophet, Isaiah was worthy of as much respect as Moses. Significantly, the last part of Isaiah 66:2 says that God esteems those who are humble and contrite in spirit and who tremble at His Word. Stephen left this timely and powerful challenge unstated for his hearers.

By this statement, the speaker entrenches himself behind undisputed facts of their own history, and the sentiments of their own prophets, in reference to the temple, and is now ready to spring upon them the whole concealed power of the carefully arranged facts from the life of Moses and of Joseph.

÷Acts 7:49
Acts 7:49

Stephen quotes Isaiah 66:1-2 in Acts 7:49-50.
The quotation is nearly verbatim from the LXX.

'Heaven is my throne, and earth my footstool. -- Stephen shows that God does not need such a temple. Heaven is His throne; the universe in His dwelling place. So the temple might be destroyed (as Jesus had prophesied would happen) without hurting God Himself.

What house will you build for me, says the Lord, -- What house can be large or magnificent enough to be the dwelling of Him who made all things?

or what is the place of my rest? -- That is, where is there a place suitable for God to rest, like a man sits down and rests in the comfort of his own home?

The truth being spoken by Stephen is that God is not confined in His worship to any one place, people, or nation.

Stephen's point is that God is greater than the temple and, thus, the Jewish leaders were guilty of blasphemy by confining God to it.

÷Acts 7:50
Acts 7:50

Did not my hand make all these things?' -- Scriptures over and over again assert that God has created this world and the entire universe.

The point is that Solomon and Isaiah recognized that a building could not contain the God of creation!

Do these verses imply an argument for the inclusion of Gentiles? However, Solomon himself saw the temple as a place for the world to come to YHWH (cf. 1 Kings 8:41-43). It was the Greek-speaking Jews (i.e. the seven in Acts 6) who saw and proclaimed the worldwide mission even before the Apostles recognized this aspect of Jesus' teachings (cf. Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8). Stephen may have been asserting this by implication in verse 50.

÷Acts 7:51
Acts 7:51

Stephen now drives home the application in Acts 7:51-53.

Some think Stephen's defense was interrupted by the sneers and restlessness of his hearers (Acts 7:54). For at this point the tone of his calm argument suddenly changes with a sharp challenge to his hearers like a charge of "heretic" or "infidel" would be today.

"You stiff-necked people, -- "Stiff-necked" is a figure taken from an animal that is headstrong, stubborn, unyielding, and that will not submit to being yoked or bridled.

The word had been applied to the sins of Israel in an earlier time (Exodus 33:3; Exodus 33:5; Exodus 34:9). In applying this expression to his hearers, Stephen was using the identical language of Moses when he conveyed God's rebuke to Israel. Considering that the Sanhedrin members professed to be standing on Moses' side against Stephen, this must have made Stephen's words doubly cutting to them.

uncircumcised in heart and ears, -- Circumcision was the external sign of being a Jew, of acknowledging the authority of the Law of Moses. The expression "uncircumcised in heart" denotes those, then, who were not willing to acknowledge that Law or submit to it.

"Uncircumcised in ears" means they were unwilling to hear what God says. (See Deuteronomy 10:16; Jeremiah 9:26).

you always resist the Holy Spirit. -- How? By resisting the preaching of God's messengers! cf. Acts 6:11-13; Acts 7:54-55; Luke 10:16; Matthew 23:13-39.)

As your fathers did, so do you. -- Joseph had been sold by his brothers; Moses was rejected and became a fugitive, and rejected even after leading his people out of Egypt! All the prophets had met with similar treatment.

And Stephen charges his listeners with being like those who rejected God's chosen leaders.

÷Acts 7:52
Acts 7:52

Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? -- (2 Chronicles 36:16). And Christ (Matthew 23:37) brought the same charge against Jerusalem, "thou that killest the prophets."

The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple was an "avenging of the apostles and prophets." (Luke 21:22; Revelation 18:20; Revelation 6:10; Revelation 19:2; Hebrews 10:30).

And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, -- Such examples would be Isaiah, and multiple prophets down to even John the Baptist. (Matthew 23:35; Matthew 23:37; Luke 11:51).

the Righteous [Just] One -- A title applied to Jesus (Acts 3:14; Acts 22:14; 1 John 2:1).

whom you have now betrayed and murdered, -- Stephen charges, "This crowd went beyond just killing the prophets, you murdered the Messiah Himself!" The Sanhedrin members were principals in the death of Jesus!

÷Acts 7:53
Acts 7:53

you who received the law -- "Law" is the Law of Moses – the law they professed to be keeping and which they had accused Stephen of blaspheming.

as delivered by angels -- Some think "delivered by angels" means that angels *were present* when God gave this Law through Moses (Psalms 68:17; Deuteronomy 33:2). Others think it means that

angels *were the instruments* through whom the Law was given to Moses (cf. Hebrews 2:2; Galatians 3:19). Still others believe we should translate the word "messengers," and understand it to refer to *the human messengers* Moses, Aaron and Joshua.

you who received ... and did not keep it." -- There is emphasis on the word "**you**." For one to kill Christ accidentally would be bad. 'But you – you who had the Law – for you to kill the Christ was a terrible crime.'

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If one wonders how Luke would have known the content of this message, at the end of the chapter Luke points us to someone who was there and witnessed the entire set of proceedings—Saul of Tarsus, his future coworker and traveling companion. (Acts 7:58).

÷Acts 7:54

Acts 7:54

Now when they heard these things they were enraged [infuriated], -- (Compare Acts 5:33). It is literally "cut to the heart." Stephen's message really got to these leaders, but instead of repenting, they turned, as always, to rejection and murder (cf. Acts 5:33).

and they ground [gnashed] their teeth against him. -- Here we see a display of anger and frustration (cf. Psalms 35:16; Psalms 37:12; Job 16:9; Lamentations 2:16; Matthew 8:11-12; Matthew 13:41-42, Matthew 13:50; Matthew 22:13; Matthew 24:51; Matthew 25:30; Luke 13:28).

When men get exceedingly angry, they double up their fists and grit their teeth and bare them in an effort to convey to the object of their anger the fact of their displeasure. Like an angry dog they bared their teeth in rage at Stephen.

÷Acts 7:55

Acts 7:55

But he, -- i.e. Stephen.

full of the Holy Spirit, -- 1) This may be a reference to the appearance of Stephen, a man displaying the fruits of the Spirit despite the adverse situation he is in (Galatians 5:22-24); Or. 2) more probable to a miraculous manifestation of the Holy Spirit's presence which enabled Stephen to see a view into heaven (Acts 6:10; cf. 2 Corinthians 12:2-4).

gazed into heaven -- When a man is in extreme circumstances, he just automatically looks up toward heaven, as if imploring heaven's help or protection or encouragement. Stephen is in such circumstances. He was aware that his final statement had triggered such a response that there was no safety or justice possible at the hands of the Sanhedrin. What he sees as he looks toward heaven was more than most mortal men are granted to see at such moments.

and saw the glory of God, -- The literal word "saw" usually denotes a visible symbol. The word "glory" is often used of the Shekinah, as we have noted earlier in our study of Stephen's speech (Acts 7:2).

Whenever mortal men have been given a glimpse into the heavenly throne room, and then try to tell us what they saw, the One who sits on the throne of the universe is seldom described, save that what is seen is a splendor, a light, a glowing sphere surrounding and emanating from Him

who sits on the throne (Revelation 4:2-3; 1 Timothy 6:16). This sphere of light is what apparently Stephen saw and calls "glory."

and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; -- The scene may allude to Daniel 7:9-14.

We have scripture of Jesus being seated at the right hand of God Mark 16:19; 1 Peter 3:22 (a figurative expression for the sharing of power and glory) and here ***standing*** as if in *intense interest* in what was happening to Stephen.

Others see in this, Jesus standing ready to do the Father's bidding.

÷Acts 7:56
Acts 7:56

and he said, "Behold, -- δοὺ idou, G2400; *Behold, lo, See.*

I see the heavens opened, -- Stephen speaks as if the skies had parted and his eyes had penetrated beyond to the third heaven where God dwells. It is probable that what Stephen saw was visible only to him, enabled by the Holy Spirit.

Stephen announces his vision to all those around him and describes Jesus as the Son of Man. Stephen was virtually saying that his vision confirms Jesus' claim to be the Son of Man. Access to God is through Jesus Christ, not through temple ritual, as the Jews were teaching (1 Timothy 2:5).

and the Son of man -- A recognized Messianic title that Stephen is applying to Jesus (Daniel 7:13-14.) This title in the Gospels is only used by Christ when speaking of Himself. This is first time it is used by another. (Matthew 26:64).

standing at the right hand of God." -- As out of great interest in the first martyr, Jesus stood cheering and giving encouragement and hope.

÷Acts 7:57
Acts 7:57

But they cried out with a loud voice -- The religious leaders react to what they see as the height of blasphemy, exalting Jesus alongside God.

and stopped their ears -- The verb "stopped" (G4912) signifies, *to compress, to hold tight together.* The picture is putting one's hands over his ears and compressing them tight to the head.

In doing this they show they truly merited the accusation of Stephen in Acts 7:51.

and rushed together upon him. -- "Rushed" (G3729) is a picture of mob action, or a riot. We can see them, with hands covering their ears and shouting, "Blasphemy! Blasphemy" and rushing wildly to get their hands violently on Stephen.

÷Acts 7:58
Acts 7:58

Then they cast him out of the city -- In accordance with the Law (Leviticus 24:14) the person to be stoned must be carried without the camp, and to the people of Jerusalem the walls of the city were as the limits of the camp.

Whether the mob took the time to led Stephen out of the city by a gate, or simply cast him down over the wall of the temple complex and proceeded to stone him (as they did James, the brother of Jesus in AD 66) we don't know. There are two traditional sites of Stephen's stoning.

> There was a place set apart for such punishment. The person to be stoned was placed on an elevation twice the height of a man, from whence with his hands bound he was thrown down, and then a stone as much as two men could carry was rolled down upon him by the witnesses, after which all the people present cast stones upon him. (CBSC)

There was a matter of Roman law, however, that was ignored. The right of capital punished had been taken away from the Sanhedrin by the Romans. But there seemed to be no formal verdict rendered. The Jewish traditional law said that a criminal could not be stoned on the same day the verdict was rendered. But it was actually a mob, with the nod of the Sanhedrin, that murdered Stephen, in violation of all law, Roman and Jewish.

and stoned him; -- Death by stoning was the legal penalty for blaspheming the name of God (Leviticus 24:16), however, this was not a formal execution but an act of mob violence.

and the witnesses -- False witnesses had been set up at Stephen. Acts 6:11-13; Leviticus 24:14; Leviticus 24:16; John 10:31; Deuteronomy 17:7. With the exception of the witnesses against Stephen who knew they had misrepresented what he had preached, the other on-lookers probably felt like the Law was being carried out.

laid down their garments -- It was their loose outer garments that were laid down so that they might be more ready to discharge their task. The law ordained that the first stone should be thrown by the witnesses. After they threw the first stones, all the rest would join in.

at the feet of a young man named Saul. -- This is the first reference to Saul of Tarsus in the Book of Acts, later better known as Paul. Saul holding the garments of those that did the stoning may indicate that Saul was the leading prosecutor of the charges against Stephen.

young man named Saul. -- Saul's part in this murder must have lingered on his conscience to be regretted years later Acts 22:20; 1 Timothy 1:15; 1 Corinthians 15:9**. T**he Jews often called one "young" between the ages of 25 and 40 years. Consider Paul's address to Timothy, 1 Timothy 4:12.

Saul's importance in the growth of Christianity can hardly be overestimated. The famous Jewish historian Abram Sachar wrote of Him:

> "Of Paul we know more than of any other influential religious character of antiquity [except Jesus Christ]." (Abram Sachar, *A History of the Jews*, p. 136.)

Saul is called "a young man" (νεανίας, *neanias*, G3494), cf. Acts 20:9; Acts 23:17-18; Acts 23:22), but we do not know his exact age. Since he died about A.D. 68, and since Stephen probably died about A.D. 34, perhaps Saul was in his early or mid-thirties. Jesus and Saul appear to have been about the same age.

:Acts 7:59
Acts 7:59

And as they were stoning Stephen, -- This was the punishment prescribed in the law for blasphemy (Leviticus 24:16); however, this was not a formal execution but an act of mob violence.

he prayed, -- The tense of the verbs show that as the stoning continues he prays. It is interesting to note that Stephen prays to Jesus, as did the disciples in Acts 1:24. However, in the rest of the NT prayer is taught to be made to the Father in the name of the Son. (John 14:13-14; John 15:16; John 16:23-24; John 16:26; Ephesians 5:20; Colossians 3:17; James 5:14).

"Lord Jesus, -- In the NT, formal or liturgical prayer is usually offered through Christ to the Father (Ephesians 2:18), but on occasion to the Lord Jesus (Acts 7:59-60; Acts 9:10-17; Acts 22:16, Acts 22:19) cf. (1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Corinthians 16:22; Acts 1:24; Acts 9:21; Revelation 22:20)

receive my spirit." -- For Stephen knew that the departure of his spirit was soon to take place. Notice that Stephen believed that he was going to heaven to be with Jesus (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:6-8) and not to hades (i.e. the holding place of the dead like the Hebrew *sheol*).

Stephen may have witnessed Jesus' crucifixion, or at least had heard about it in detail because he uses two similar phrases (i.e. Acts 7:59-60, cf. Luke 23:34,; Luke 23:46).

:Acts 7:60
Acts 7:60

And he knelt down -- The kneeling down may have been before the stoning had commenced. Some translate this "falling on his knees" [NASB, etc.] Stoning was not always a quick experience, the text implies it took a few minutes before he died.

Stephen chose to die on his knees in prayer.

and cried with a loud voice, -- Stephen raised his voice in dying, as Jesus had done (Luke 23:46). Did he raise his voice so he could be heard? Or was it to express ardently his prayer to the Lord? Perhaps the exertion somehow also allieved the pain somewhat.

"Lord, do not hold this sin against them." -- As had Jesus before him (Luke 23:34), Stephen prayed for God to not reckon this deed against them.

And when he had said this, he fell asleep. -- Sleep is a euphemism often used in the NT to describe the death of the faithful (e.g., John 11:11-14; Acts 13:36; 1 Corinthians 15:6, 1 Corinthians 15:20; 1 Corinthians 15:51; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-15).

:Acts 8:1
Acts 8:1

TIME FRAME: Ch. 8 is about A.D. 33

And Saul was consenting to his death. -- The killing of Stephen was approved and seemed a good thing to Saul. While persecuting Christians Paul lived in good conscience in this matter [See

below]. He seems to have really regretted it later 1 Timothy 1:15 1 Timothy 1:13; 1 Corinthians 15:9; Ephesians 3:8

And on that day -- The martyr of Stephen moved the church into a new phase. (See Acts 1:8) It marks the beginning of a dedicated effort to spread the gospel further than Jerusalem. Led by Saul of Tarsus, the persecution scattered the Jerusalem fellowship and led to the first missionary outreach of the church.

a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem; The death of Stephen saw the beginning of a great tumult for the Christians in Jerusalem. We see the extent of it in Acts 8:3.

and they were all scattered throughout the region of Judea and Sama'ria, -- There was a mass exodus of the disciples but not everyone left. It seems that the Hellenists, because Stephen was one, likely bore the brunt of the persecution (cf. Acts 11:19-20).

except the apostles. -- Some think the Sanhedrin may have been afraid to harm them. It may be that the apostles went into hiding and doing their work underground.

SINCERITY IS NOT ENOUGH
Paul was sincere -- Acts 23:1 & Acts 26:9-11, 1 Timothy 1:12-16, Acts 7:58-60 & Acts 8:1.
Cornelius was -- Acts 10:1-2 & Acts 11:13-14.
See also Proverbs 14:12, Luke 16:15, Isaiah 55:8-9.

÷Acts 8:2
Acts 8:2

Devout men buried Stephen, -- Good godly men. Perhaps even some pious Jews (Acts 2:5; Luke 2:25) who publicly protested Stephen's death. We could except that fellow believers were involved and the group may have included acquaintances who thought well of him.

and made great lamentation over him. -- Stephen becomes the first Christian martyr. It seems like there was a formal funeral service, and very usual, for one charged with blasphemy and stoned would normally have no funeral honors, Jeremiah 22:19.

"Lamentation" is the Hebrew word for mourning (Genesis 23:2; 2 Samuel 3:31). It must have took some courage to perform the funeral rites for one in such disfavor as Stephen had fallen.

÷Acts 8:3
Acts 8:3

But Saul was ravaging [made havock of] the church, -- The word means to lay waste; it usually referred to devastation committed by wild beasts, lions, bears, wolves, etc. The presence tense indicates continuous action; it was an on-going process.

and entering house after house, -- It appears Saul and his enforcers were going house to house among the known Christians. He may have interrupted "house services" to arrest those present.

he dragged off men and women -- The picture is that Saul pursued the Christians without mercy or discretion. He did his task with an enthusiastic zeal (Acts 22:4).

[Such zeal when it is converted to Christ is great!]

and committed them to prison. -- The large number of arrests made it impossible that they should all be brought to trial at once. (See Hebrews 10:32-34). Some may have been put under a bond, or had their property confiscated, some flogged. The extent of this persecution is unknown.

÷Acts 8:4
Acts 8:4

Now those who were scattered -- Gamaliel had predicted that those who were against God would be scattered (Acts 5:37); the Church scatters, but instead of dying out like the religious leaders expect, it grows all the more.

The Hellenistic Jewish Christians scattered throughout the region and became the early evangelists. It is amazing that the worldwide mission of the church was instigated, not by the Apostles, but by Stephen and Philip.

went about preaching the word. -- The effect of the persecution was more "evangelization." This is one word, εὐαγγελιζ μενοι, *euaggelizo*, *announcing (heralding, proclaiming, preaching) the good news*, **G2097**. From this word literally comes "evangelist," one who preaches the word and"evangelization"

It is used frequently in Acts for missionary efforts (see Acts 8:40; Acts 9:32; Acts 13:6; Acts 14:24; Acts 15:3, Acts 15:41; Acts 16:6; Acts 18:23; Acts 19:1, Acts 19:21; Acts 20:2).

The "word" here is the gospel, which was to be preached to all the world, as Jesus commanded, Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16.; Luke 24:46-48.

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EXAMPLES OF CONVERSION:

1. Pentecost- Acts 2:22 & Acts 2:36-47
2. Samaria- Acts 8:4-13
3. Ethiopian eunuch- Acts 8:26-39
4. Paul (Saul)- Acts 9:1-20 & Acts 22:6-16
5. Cornelius– Acts 10:1-48 & Acts 11:1-18
6. Lydia- Acts 16:13-15
7. Philippian jailer- Acts 16:23-34
8. Corinthians- Acts 18:8

÷Acts 8:5
Acts 8:5

Philip -- One of the seven Hellenistic (Greek-speaking and cultured) Jews select to help meet the material needs of the members. Acts 6:3-5; cf Acts 21:8.

went down to a city of Sama'ria, -- The spread of the gospel to the Samaritans represents an important advance in preaching the gospel to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

Whether this was "the" city of Samaria, or "a" city of that territory is not clear. But most likely from the events that are recorded it was the capital city of the district of Samaria, call Sebaste, at this time.

Some have thought this may be the city of Sychar where there were already some that had met Christ and had believed in Him. John 4:4-5; John 4:40-41.

and proclaimed to them the Christ. -- Philip is proclaiming that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Careful reading in this chapter one can find some of the things that must be involved in preaching Christ.

÷Acts 8:6
Acts 8:6

And the multitudes with one accord gave heed to what was said by Philip, -- The original words imply that crowds of the people came to faith in Christ believing Philip's preaching.

The idea that they "gave heed" indicates they responded to the call the gospel required of them. (See Acts 8:12; Mark 16:15-16.)

when they heard him and saw the signs which he did. -- As with Peter and Stephen, Philip's message was accompanied by miracles attesting its validity and authority (compare Acts 2:43; Acts 6:8). The apostles had laid their hands on him Acts 6:6 (Acts 8:17-19) and he had received this ability by the Holy Spirit.

They were to be *signs* that the message which Philip was bringing was from God. The signs here enumerated (Acts 8:7) are such as could leave no doubt in the minds of those who witnessed the cures.

÷Acts 8:7
Acts 8:7

Luke lists the specific types of signs Philip performed. These signs demonstrate that Jesus has power not only over the physical realm (as in Peter's healing of the lame man; Acts 3:6-10), but also over the supernatural realm.

For unclean spirits came out of many who were possessed, -- Luke, a distinguished physician and scientist, here made a separation between physical maladies like palsy and lameness, and the conditions attributed to unclean spirits. See also the difference between "demon possession" and "sickness" Jesus' healing ministry, Matthew 4:24.

It would be good for the reader to make a study of "demon possession" in the Scriptures. Let it be sufficient to say that one purpose of Jesus' coming was to destroy the works of Satan. (See e-Sword module: Gann - Topic Studies, "Demons and Demonology". Such modules can be found at http://home.hiwaay.net/~wgann

crying with a loud voice; -- These unclean, vile spirits acted just as did those that were driven out by Jesus: they always shouted with hideous cries when they were compelled to leave their poor victims.

and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. -- Note that here in verse 7 demon possession is clearly distinguished from physical infirmity. Under the general name "paralyzed" several infirmities were included: disabled, enfeebled, and paralyzed (from a failure of the nerves to respond to motor messages from the brain).

÷Acts 8:8
Acts 8:8

So there was much joy in that city. -- There was rejoicing because so many persons who before had been sick and paralyzed are now healed. There is rejoicing because the old subjugation to demons that some used to suffer is now broken. There is rejoicing because sins have been forgiven when these Samaritans responded to the gospel.

÷Acts 8:9
Acts 8:9

But there was a man named Simon -- According to Justin Martyr (*Apol*. i. 26) he was born in a village of Samaria, and after the events mentioned in this chapter describes him as persistently hostile to Peter and even following that Apostle to Rome.

who had previously practiced magic [sorcery] in the city -- For "magic" the Greek word is *magos*, for sorcery, magician. This man is usually spoken of as Simon Magus, or Simon the Sorcerer. Like the magicians of Egypt he may have had a basic knowledge of chemistry, and used the occult to mystify it.

and amazed the nation of Sama'ria, saying that he himself was somebody great. -- Simon boasted and pretended to a "great one." He obviously liked to have power and recognition.

÷Acts 8:10
Acts 8:10

They all gave heed to him, -- He had a following who paid attention to him. "Gave heed" is used of Philip's listeners in Acts 8:6, and later Lydia in Acts 16:14. It describes attentive listening that leads to acceptance of the message being delivered.

from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is that power of God which is called Great." -- The people of Samaria gave Simon the title "Great One" because they believed his sorcery was somehow associated with God's own power. This man had thoroughly tricked the locals. He may have even tricked himself (cf. Acts 8:9, Acts 8:13).

÷Acts 8:11
Acts 8:11

And they gave heed to him, -- The giving "heed" to him is the same as the previous verse where all "paid attention."

because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. -- His name is Jewish or Samaritan, so he probably had been born and lived there a long time. He had used his magic arts to confound the people and make a name for himself.

÷Acts 8:12
Acts 8:12

But when they believed Philip -- The truth of the gospel of Jesus and the power of His Spirit overcome the Samaritans' enchantment with Simon and his sorcery.

as he preached good news about the kingdom of God -- Preaching the gospel is bring "good news." Jesus had preach that the kingdom of God was at hand when he began his ministry (Matthew 12:28; Mark 1:14-15). It has been the subject he spoke about with his apostles after his resurrection and before his ascension back into heaven (Acts 1:3).

and the name of Jesus Christ, --- Philip preached that He was the Messiah of whom there was knowledge and perhaps some expectation among the Samaritans (John 4:25; John 4:42). The question of the woman of Samaria "Is not this the Christ?" was answered by Philip's preaching.

they were baptized, both men and women. -- Here, as in Acts 2:38-41, when men become believers they are baptized. Time and again in Acts, when we see a case of conversion, we shall be told by Luke that the believers were baptized. It is a part of discipling a person to baptize him or her (Matthew 28:19-20).

÷Acts 8:13
Acts 8:13

Even Simon himself believed, -- Even Simon is convinced of Jesus' lordship by the power of Philip's message and miracles—although he will prove to be ignorant of its true significance (compare Acts 8:20-23).

and after being baptized he continued with Philip. -- Many commentaries have real difficulty harmonizing Simon's conversion and falling back into sin with Calvin's doctrine of "once saved, always saved." Simon's faith and baptism reads just a genuine as the other Samaritans who came to faith and obedience to the Gospel.

And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed. -- Luke's words show that Simon was just as wonder-struck at the sight of the works wrought by Philip, just as his own works had made the Samaritans to wonder. Simon could see that Philip's miracles were real and not the delusion of some magician.

÷Acts 8:14
Acts 8:14

Now when the apostles at Jerusalem -- The apostles themselves had not been scatter abroad yet as had many of the Christians there (Acts 8:1).

heard that Sama'ria had received the word of God, -- The phrase "word of God" is used by Luke for the whole sum and substance of the gospel of Christ. Here we see that to "receive the word of God" means to believe it and obey the commands of the Lord to be baptized. (See Acts 8:12; Colossians 2:6).

they sent to them Peter and John, -- We will see in the next verse that their purpose was to lay hands on the believers to impart the Holy Spirit upon them (Acts 8:17-18). For that was the way the Holy Spirit was received. After Stephen and Philip had received the Spirit this way they were enabled to work miracles. (Acts 6:6).

The miraculous gifts of the Spirit were imparted to others only by the hands of the apostles. (Acts 8:18).

÷Acts 8:15
Acts 8:15

who came down -- Samaria actually is north of Jerusalem, but it is still "down" from Jerusalem. This is the usual language for someone leaving Jerusalem, for this required the traveler to descend ("go down"), no matter what direction of the compass you were journeying as you left Jerusalem. (cf. Luke 10:30).

and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit; -- The bestowal of the spiritual gifts was not at the discretion of the apostles; they prayed previously.

The restriction of the conveyance of such gifts to the apostles is very strong presumptive evidence in favor of the view that miraculous powers ceased with the generation on whom the apostles had laid their hands. Romans 1:11 is a similar example of spiritual gifts being passed on only by the apostles. (See Acts 6:6; Acts 19:6; 2 Timothy 1:6; Hebrews 6:2).

÷Acts 8:16
Acts 8:16

for it had not yet fallen on any of them, -- There was no manifestation of spiritual gifts among the Samaritan Christians like there was among those who had the apostles hands laid upon them in prayer. (See 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 for information on the spiritual gifts.)

The NASB reads "for **He** had fallen" instead of **"it**," understanding the Holy Spirit as a person, and using the personal pronoun "He."

The word "fall" may express the idea of the sudden advent of special powers when the miraculous measure (Acts 1:8-9; Acts 2:1-4; Acts 10:44; Acts 11:15), or the the measure that enabled spiritual gifts (Acts 19:6 has "fell" rather than "came" in some MSS.)

but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. -- The preposition, (εἰς *eis* G1519 *into, unto, toward, for*) which is the same that is used by Christ (Matthew 28:19) at the Lord's command for believers to be baptized into a new relationship, or union, with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It was the same preposition used by Peter on Pentecost that the believers were to be baptized for the remission of their sins. It speaks of the tie by which the new converts in baptism are bound to Christ as His followers, servants, and worshippers. (See Galatians 3:26-27.)

÷Acts 8:17
Acts 8:17

Then they laid their hands on them -- When we observe this passage (Acts 8:14-19) we learn that this measure of the Holy Spirit came only by the laying on of an apostle's hand. Acts 6:6; Acts 8:17-19; Acts 19:6; 2 Timothy 1:6; cf. Hebrews 6:2.

Only the apostles are seen performing signs and wonders (Acts 2:43; Acts 5:12) until they laid their hands on the seven selected in Acts 6:6 and subsequently for Stephen and Philip it is recorded they were also performing such (Acts 6:8; Acts 8:6).

It would follow then that with the death of the apostles and those whom they had laid hands on came the end of the miraculous works of the Spirit manifested in the "spiritual gifts" of 1 Corinthians 12, etc. (see notes on 1 Corinthians 13:8-14; Hebrews 2:3-4).

and they received the Holy Spirit. -- They were now enabled by the Holy Spirit at His discretion (Hebrews 2:4) to be be privileged to posess special gifts for the purpose of edifying the church and helping it grow to a maturity and unity of faith. (Ephesians 4:12-14; Hebrews 2:4; 1 Corinthians 12:12); 1 Corinthians 13:8-14).

÷Acts 8:18
Acts 8:18

Now when Simon saw -- See below for sermon points on what Simon saw.

that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, -- Simon realized that the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit were given through the laying on of the apostles' hands. That was why Peter and John had to come down from Jerusalem to Samaria, to convey such to the new Samaritan Christians.

Such spiritual gifts would enable them to grow in faith and to edify one another (Ephesians 4:12-14; 1 Corinthians 12:12).

he offered them money, -- Simon didn't just want the Holy Spirit in this miraculous measure for himself, but he wanted the power of the apostles had to impart the Spirit in this measure to others.

How rich he could become to give the power to others to do such miracles and wonders. He old love for power and notoriety and to be considered "Great" (Acts 8:9) came back upon him.

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
What Simon saw -- . ["*Some Things Simon Saw"* Sermons_Gann.topx]

SOME THINGS SIMON SAW

Acts 8:5-24

1. One of the great accounts of conversion in Acts. The account of an individual who had formerly practiced magic in Samaria.
2. The conversion of Simon was a milestone in the conquest of the gospel as it showed the superior power of the gospel over the false religions of man.

3. Let us consider some of the things which Simon saw when confronted with the gospel. Acts 8.

I. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BIBLE MIRACLES AND COUNTERFEITS.

1. Simon the sorcerer deceived people with his magical arts prior to the coming of Philip. (Acts 8:9)
   a. Through these, he pretended to be someone great and deceived the people.
   b. Yet, when Philip performed genuine miracles, Simon saw clearly the difference in the two. Acts 8:6-7.
2. Some people today cannot tell the difference between the genuine miracles of Christ and the spiritual counterfeits of today.
   a. Here are some of the genuine miracles:
      Raising the dead
      Turning water into wine
      Healing men who are born blind
      Walking on water
      Feeding 5000 with 5 loaves and 2 fish.
      Healing cripples lame for 40 years
   b. Some Fake miracles:
      Miracle oil
      Coughing up a tumor
      Walking better, Insomnia
      (Tell of B'ham man turned out of line from Earnest Angely's service.)
      [Wheel-chairs furnished.]
      Diabetes case advised to still take insulin

II. THAT THE GOSPEL BROUGHT JOY INTO PEOPLE'S LIVES

1. Acts 8:8 (Acts 8:39; Acts 15:32; Acts 15:3 Acts 16:34)
2. The preaching of Jesus brings Joy.
   a. Some have adulterated the message.

III. THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD WAS ESTABLISHED

1. Philip came to Samaria and preached Christ and the kingdom to Simon.
   a. The kingdom was good news (Acts 8:12 NASB)
   b. The good news was that the promised kingdom had come.
2. Premillennialists deny that the kingdom of God has come despite these Scriptures:
   a. Mark 9:1
   b. Hebrews 12:28
   c. Colossians 1:13-14
3. Simon saw that the kingdom had come and wanted to become a part of it through the new birth (John 3:5)

IV. WHAT WAS NECESSARY FOR SALVATION:

1. Simon saw what he had to be to be saved.
   Here is what he did:
   a. Gave heed to the preaching (Acts 8:6)
   b. Believed the word of God (Acts 8:13)
   c. Quit practicing sorcery (repentance) cf Acts 8:11-13
   d. Was baptized (Acts 8:13)
   e. Continued with the disciples (Acts 8:13)
2. The plan of salvation revealed by Jesus was clearly understood by Simon. Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16 and Luke 24:46-48

V. THAT THE MIRACULOUS GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WERE GIVEN THROUGH THE LAYING ON OF THE APOSTLES' HANDS.

1. The miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit were given through the laying on of the apostles' hands.
   a. That is why Peter and John had to come down from Jerusalem to Samaria. Acts 8:14-15.
   b. That is what Simon saw (Acts 8:18).
   c. That is the gift he tired to buy (Acts 8:18-19)
2. Other passages confirm this. Romans 1:11; 2 Timothy 1:6
3. When the apostles died, the means of imparting these gifts was removed and they ceased to exist. 1 Corinthians 13:10 ff
4. Today we have the written word that brings men to faith. John 20:31; Romans 10:17

VI. THAT A CHILD OF GOD CAN FALL FROM (GRACE) SALVATION

1. Through Simon's sin, the following things happened:
   a. He was destined to perish (Acts 8:20)
   b. His heart was not right (Acts 8:21)
   c. He was in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity (Acts 8:23)
2. He learned by experience that a child of God can fall from grace (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:12; Galatians 5:4)
3. He also saw what the fallen Christian must do to be saved.
   a. He was told to "repent and pray" (Acts 8:22)
   b. His prayer would have been a confession of his sin to God (1 John 1:7).

CONCLUSION

1. If you are here and right with God, rejoice in the good news of salvation and the Kingdom with is ours.
2. Are you here outside of Christ? If so, why not do as Simon did and obey the gospel of Jesus Christ?
3. Have you fallen from grace (salvation)? If so, repent and pray that the very thought of your heart might be forgiven you.

÷Acts 8:19
Acts 8:19

saying, "Give me also this power, that any one on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." -- Simon has a relapse of character and falls back to his former character. This is shown by what he asks for. He does not desire the Holy Spirit for himself as a spiritual gift, but that he may be able to bestow, what he looks upon as a higher power than his own magic, upon others.

We can learn from this narrative that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been made apparent by the new powers conferred on those who received it. Simon had seen (Acts 8:18) and heard their works and words and hence his application to the apostles.

÷Acts 8:20
Acts 8:20

But Peter said to him, -- Peter, the apostles, takes the initive in replying to Simon's request.

"Your silver perish with you, -- "Silver," that is, your money. The reply is that not only is Simon's money not going to endure, but that Simon also is going to perish. Peter's language expresses his disgust with Simon's request and indignation.

because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! -- Simon's heart was greedy, and he didn't have the understanding that it was foolish to try to buy something from the God of heaven!

Simon thought of the Holy Spirit, not as a "gift of God" but eaarned by the language which Peter employed of God and if he could secure it for himself he would just as powerful as the apostles.

It is as if Simon the Magician was trying to "buy" an "apostleship," or the position of "an apostle."

÷Acts 8:21
Acts 8:21

You have neither part nor lot [portion] in this matter, -- The first term "part" (*meris*) means a portion in common. It has a negative connotation here and in 2 Corinthians 6:15.

The second term "portion" (*klēros*) is the OT word for "lot," which was the way in the OT the high priest determined the will of God (i.e. *Urim* and *Thummim*).

By the word "lot" the thought is carried back to the election of Matthias (Acts 1:26). In that case the choice had been left to the "Lord who knows the hearts of all men," but Simon's character is patent to all; "his heart was not right with God."

Peter is saying to Simon, "You have nothing from God in this matter (the matter of bestowing the 'gift of the Holy Spirit') and your heart demonstrates how filled with sin you are!"

for your heart is not right before God. -- "Heart" usually stands for a man's thoughts; but here is speaks, it seems, of Simon's motives or principles of conduct.

The word "right" (e*uthus)* has both the sense of "being as it ought to be" and "straightforward, sincere." This is why we think "heart" here is a reference to motives. Peter did not need to miraculously search Simon's heart to know this. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Luke 6:45).

Even if his heart had been right, Simon still would have had no part in the bestowing of spiritual gifts. Acts 8:18 and Acts 19:1-7 indicate that only apostles could pass on the miraculous gift of the Spirit, and Simon hardly qualified to be an apostle.

"Before God" means that God is able to see and judge Simon's motives, and He sees they are not right.

÷Acts 8:22
Acts 8:22

Repent therefore of this wickedness of yours, -- Simon has "believed" and been "baptized" (Acts 8:13), but now after sin coming into his life he is told to "repent" of his wickedness. His sin of greed etc. is documented in the previous verse.

and pray to the Lord that, -- Already becoming a Christian already Simon isn't told to be baptized again, but to pray for forgiveness.

> **repent ... and pray --** The way for an erring Christian to receive forgiveness and get back in favor with God. But please note that this is ***not*** the instructions for how an unbeliever can be "born again." (1 John 1:9-10; James 5:16)

if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. -- One commentary considered if Peter may have wondered if God would judge Simon as He had Ananias and Sapphira, and if Simon was about to fall dead at his feet (Acts 5:5-9).

Simon's "intent of heart" is shown in Acts 8:18-19, and speaks of his selfish desire to be able to deceive the people in order to continue in his place of power and influence over them.

÷Acts 8:23
Acts 8:23

For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness -- The terms "gall" (*cholē*) and "bitterness" (*pikros*) both refer to a bitter spirit, usually associated with anger and apostasy (cf. Deuteronomy 29:18; Deuteronomy 32:28-33; Hebrews 12:15). Sin and iniquity which will destroy one's soul is spoken of as a deadly poison and bitterness in the heart.

and in the bond of iniquity." -- Simon was captured by his sin for greed for money and power. In the state of this kind of thinking and sin, he was lost even after having become a believer and being baptized Acts 8:13.

÷Acts 8:24
Acts 8:24

And Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, -- Simon understands the gravity of Peter's words and his request for Peter to pray for him and he clearly wants to avoid the loss spoken of in Acts 8:20. The indication is he has repented and we ought to take this at face value and not be judgmental of him as we have no additional information about him that is reliable.

that nothing of what you have said may come upon me." -- There is an emphasis to Simon's language as he pleads, "*You* pray for me (too)!" Prayer for others is efficacious, especially when they too are praying for their own needs. (1 John 1:9-10; James 5:16)

Men would today well today to ask others to pray for them, for forgiveness if in sin, but for God's blessings in their lives and work no matter what. Paul said, "Brethren, pray for us" (1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; Hebrews 13:18).

÷Acts 8:25
Acts 8:25

Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, -- The "they" here are the apostles Peter and John. They continued to give their eye-witness evidence regarding Jesus of Nazareth and to preaching the gospel commanded them of the Lord. (Acts 1:8; Mark 16:15).

they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans. -- Peter and John had not been sent on an extended missionary journey, but only to pray and lay hands on the new converts in Samaria that they might receive the Holy Spirit. This done, they returned to their work in Jerusalem, but preached in other Samaritan villages along the way.

:Acts 8:26
Acts 8:26

But an angel of the Lord said to Philip, -- Luke continues to inform us about the work of Philip. We note that an "angel of the Lord" spoke to Philip and not to the one to be converted.

"Rise and go -- The word to "rise up" (G450) indicates it may have been in a dream or vision like that of Cornelius (Acts 10:3) and of Peter (Acts 11:5). We are not told anything of Philip's reaction except that he obeyed.

toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." -- South from Samaria lay a major trade highway connecting Israel and the key Mediterranean ports of the area (including Caesarea, Joppa, and Gaza).

Philip was to locate himself on the road that lay between Jerusalem and Gaza. ***Gaza*** had been one of five chief cities of the Philistines. The original city was destroyed in the first century BC and a new city was built near the coast.

This is a desert road. -- There was more than one route from Jerusalem to Gaza, but here, either the angel or Luke specified which road Philip went to. The explanation is the "desert" or "wilderness" road that passed through the "un-populated" areas.

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EXAMPLES OF CONVERSION:

1. Pentecost- Acts 2:22 & Acts 2:36-47
2. Samaria- Acts 8:4-13
3. Ethiopian eunuch- Acts 8:26-39
4. Paul (Saul)- Acts 9:1-20 & Acts 22:6-16
5. Cornelius– Acts 10:1-48 & Acts 11:1-18
6. Lydia- Acts 16:13-15
7. Philippian jailer- Acts 16:23-34
8. Corinthians- Acts 18:8

See "Sermons_Gann.topx" for a sermon on the Ethiopian Treasurer

:Acts 8:27
Acts 8:27

And he rose and went. --The word he "arose" again is (G450) and seems to indicate he was dreaming when he received the message from the angel, or that it was a vision. Either way, he responds immediately and gets on his way. He leaves a promising work to follow the direction of the angel.

And behold, an Ethiopian, -- "Behold" G2400. A man of Ethiopia, which probably indicates a native, and not a dispersed Jew. But we can't be absolute. Ethiopia was a large kingdom located south of Egypt.

a eunuch, -- Men were usually made eunuchs to served in royal courts (compare Esther 2:3). This can refer to one who had been emasculated, or generally, to a government official. It is likely he was both since Luke refers to him as a eunuch and as one who held a position of authority in the queen's court.

a minister of the Can'dace, queen of the Ethiopians, -- He was a "minister" of finance of secretary of the treasury for the queen. Pliny tells us that Candace was not a name, but an official title given to a series of queens during this time.

in charge of all her treasure, -- Jews were abundant in Egypt and often prominent men in trade and finances. Perhaps a Jewish influence on this man had led him to become a proselyte to Judaism. (See also Revelation 18:11-19, where the great city whose overthrow was prophesied was Jerusalem in AD 70 and rise of anti-semitism.)

had come to Jerusalem to worship -- Proselytes as well as Jews made pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the special feasts. We learn this from the enumeration of those present at the feast of Pentecost (Acts 2:10-11) where proselytes are expressly named.

÷Acts 8:28
Acts 8:28

and was returning; -- He has worshipped, and probably one of the feasts he attended had concluded. This would put the man into a proper frame of mind to seek to know God more fully.

seated in his chariot, -- His mode of travel is expressed. He would likely have had large entourage accompanying him with pack animals, drivers and servants seeing to his needs at camp time, etc.

he was reading the prophet Isaiah. -- He was evidently reading aloud (see Acts 8:30, the scroll was likely in Greek). Reading aloud was common among Orientals and was specially the practice of the Jews, who accompanied the reading with a good deal of bodily motion, considering this helpful to study.

This man may have just bought an expensive leather scroll of Isaiah, (which would have been over 29 feet long, if like one found in the Dead Sea Scrolls) on his Jerusalem visit.

He is eager to study it and had opened it to the Messianic passage of Isaiah 53:7–8 and was reading it.

This man knew the importance of seeking God through the Scripture (Luke 24:25-27; John 5:39, John 5:46; Romans 10:12-15).

÷Acts 8:29
Acts 8:29

And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot." -- Philip inspired by the Holy Spirit is given his instructions. Previously God communicated to Philip through an angel, now the Holy Spirit gives him more specific guidance to get alongside the chariot, and stay with it.

The CBSC says here: "No doubt this royal treasurer had a numerous retinue, and a single traveller on a desert road would be doing what was natural in attaching himself to a train of people who were journeying in the same direction. Philip would therefore be able to approach and hear what was read without being deemed an intruder."

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The Spirit -- HOLY SPIRIT
Member of Godhead- Matthew 28:19, 1 John 5:7-8,
"He"- John 16:13; John 1:1-17, Acts 8:29,
Gave us God's word- 2 Peter 1:21,
"Sword of Spirit" is "Word"- Ephesians 6:17,
Holy Spirit baptism- Occurred twice
1. On Pentecost-- To give power to the apostles-- Acts 1:8 & Acts 2:1-4
2. At Cornelius' house to show that gentiles accepted- Acts 11:15-18 & Acts 15:7-8.
3. Paul later wrote that there is now only "One Baptism"- Ephesians 4:4
4. Baptism in the name of Christ is water baptism- Acts 10:47-48 and Acts 2:38. It is commanded of everyone- Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:16.

÷Acts 8:30
Acts 8:30

So Philip ran [ran up] to him, -- Philip gets close enough to hear the man in the chariot reading.

and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, -- The man is reading Isaiah 53:7-8.

and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" -- Philip's question refers to the application of the words. The Ethiopian would know nothing of course of the reference to Jesus. He might have heard some of the Jewish expositions of the passage. There is a play on the words in the original which it is impossible to reproduce in a translation.

÷Acts 8:31
Acts 8:31

And he said, "How can I, unless some one guides me?" -- His confusion was understandable. Even the Jewish religious experts were divided on the meaning of this passage. Some believed the slaughtered sheep represented Israel; others thought Isaiah was referring to himself, and others thought the Messiah was Isaiah's subject.

The Ethiopian uses the word "guide" (ὁδηγ σει, *hodegeo*, G3594) which is used for the guidance given by teacher to pupil. Jesus uses it [Matthew 15:14; Luke 6:39] reproachfully of the

blind guidance which the scribes and Pharisees in His day were giving to the people who came to them for instruction. He uses the same word for the guidance of the Holy Spirit (John 16:13).

And he invited [desired] Philip to come up and sit with him. -- The verb implies a very earnest request, and shows a great desire which the eunuch had for more understanding.

Here we see the man's humbleness and willingness to seek answers. This creates an opportunity for Philip to guide him into the knowledge of Jesus' identity as the promised Messiah.

÷Acts 8:32
Acts 8:32

Now the passage of the scripture which he was reading was this: -- The word rendered "passage" or "place" signifies the whole *context* of the passage. The eunuch was studying the whole account of the sufferer whom the prophet here describes.

The verses quoted here are Isaiah 53:7-8, and are given word for word from the LXX. which is most probable what the eunuch was reading. This version had been made in Egypt and was most likely to be used among those Jews with whom this man would be acquainted. Philip, being a Hellenist (Acts 6:5) would be most familiar with the Greek translation.

"As a sheep led to the slaughter or a lamb before its -- This passage is about Yahweh's Suffering Servant; it is one of the key Messianic passages in the OT.
Isaiah pictures Him as being led by others to be killed. The reference is to the crucifixion.

÷Acts 8:33
Acts 8:33

In his humiliation justice was denied him. -- Isaiah proclaims that the Messiah was grossly mistreated, and His death was unjust. Through this injustice, the one without guilt would bear the punishment for His guilty people (compare Isaiah 53:10).

Who can describe his generation? -- How can his contemporaries be described; men who under a form of judicial punishment oppress and put an innocent man to death?

Being framed here is a rhetorical question that hints at that destitute state of the servant, he will have nothing, not even descendants, in his death.

For his life is taken up from the earth." -- The Hebrew has "for he was cut off out of the land of the living." It will be seen from a comparison of the Hebrew and the LXX that the latter in some parts render a more direct interpretation or translation.

÷Acts 8:34
Acts 8:34

And the eunuch said to Philip, -- The man's humility and desire to understand the scriptures is seen in his question which is sincere and intelligent.

"About whom, pray, does the prophet say this, about himself or about some one else?" -- His confusion was understandable. Even the Jewish religious experts were divided on the meaning of this passage. Some believed the slaughtered sheep represented Israel; others thought Isaiah was referring to himself, and others thought the Messiah was Isaiah's subject.

÷Acts 8:35
Acts 8:35

Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this scripture -- Jesus, Himself, probably showed the early church how these ancient prophecies applied to Himself (cf. Luke 24:27).

he told him the good news of Jesus. -- Philip starts right where he was reading and explains the entire passage in light of the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. The OT prophecy has been fulfilled and forgiveness through Christ is offered to everyone!

÷Acts 8:36
Acts 8:36

And as they went along the road -- We must suppose that Philip travelled for some time with the eunuch, for not only has he explained that in Jesus was fulfilled all that the prophets had spoken concerning the sufferings of the Messiah, but has taught him that believers in Jesus are united with him in baptism which is a likeness to His death and resurrection (Romans 6:3-5).

they came to some water, -- The "desert road" was not a dry desert of sand, etc., but simply an area that was not highly populated. There were streams of water along the route on the western side of Palestine.

and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What is to prevent my being baptized?" -- In preaching Jesus to the Ethiopian it was necessary to teach what Jesus taught his apostles to do Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16.

The eunuch, who was not Jewish, wondered if there was any barrier that would prevent him from submitting to become a follower of Christ, and obeying his commandments for his life.

See **James 2:24** note **"Being Saved"** and the role of baptism.

÷Acts 8:37
Acts 8:37

While many modern versions omit this verse, I am somewhat skeptical of the MSS evidences that omit it. The NIV and NASB at least inserts it in brackets.

[**And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."**] NASB

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One is hard pressed, on this evidence, to dispute the conclusion of Scrivener when he wrote, "We cannot safely question the spuriousness of this verse, which all the critical editions condemn, . . ." Also, one is impressed by the words of McGarvey who said, "In regard to scarcely any reading are the textual critics more unanimously agreed, or on better manuscript evidence, than the rejection of this verse as an interpolation."12

However, one is given pause in accepting this conclusion by several facts. *First,* the verse was clearly alluded to by Iranaeus who was active from *170-200/210 A.D.,* well before the earliest manuscripts noted above were copied. Also, Cyprian, who died in *258,* apparently quoted this verse well before the earliest copy we have of the manuscripts. Brents, who advised caution in accepting the decision of the textual critics, used the quotation by Iranaeus to contend that the arguments against he verse, while strong, were not to his mind conclusive.[13] *Second,* one is made to wonder at the context if the verse is omitted. Brents put the matter in this way:

> Are we to believe that Philip said nothing in answer to the question? and yet the eunuch commanded the chariot to be stillthat both got out of it and went down into the water in silence. Can any sane man believe it? Is there not a perceivable blank which the sense requires to be filled with just such language as we find in the verse in question. 14

The force of this contextual consideration is clear in the words of David Lipscomb,

> In reference to this, it is claimed by the textuary critics generally that the confession there recorded is an interpolation. The context and circumstances would indicate that just such a confession was made. It is also clear that Philip was not seeking a formal confession, but evidence of faith.
>
> Whatever confession was made came in response to this seeking. The natural evidence of faith in the heart is the confession with the mouth. When Philip said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest," the natural response would be: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.""

It is interesting to note the words of F. F. Bruce, who rejects the verse as spurious. But, when he dealt with the contextual force for the confession he stated, "Philip surely must have satisfied himself first of the genuineness of the Ethiopian's faith. (No doubt he did so satisfy himself, but there are some minds that cannot be content to leave such things to be inferred)." (18) This shows his necessity to accept the argument for inclusion by virtue of the context.

It seems best, then, to be very cautious in the decision for or against this verse. The testimony of the textual critics is, with only rare exception, unanimous in rejecting it. But, one must admit the force of the material stated by Brents and Lipscomb and clearly implied in the conclusion by Bruce. One would be hard pressed to prove the verse is original on the basis of textual critical material, but there is some basis for questioning whether textual critical material alone resolves the issue in this verse.

- William Woodson, pg 44,45, Difficult Texts of the New Testament Explained, edited by Wendell Winkler, (The Fourth Annual "Fort Worth" Lectures, the Brown Trail Church of Christ, Bedfort, TX) 1981.

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÷Acts 8:38
Acts 8:38

And he ordered the chariot to stop; -- The Ethiopian ordered the chariot-driver to stop, and of course the whole retinue would see what took place, and they may certainly be regarded as the nucleus of a congregation to be established in Ethiopia.

Tradition tells us that the eunuch labored to evangelize his countrymen, and none were more likely to be influenced by his teaching than those who were present at his baptism and were, with him, witnesses of the way in which Philip was taken from them (Acts 8:40).

and they both went down into the water, -- Nothing can be more graphic than the simple narrative of this interesting and important baptism. Surely Luke must have heard it from Philip's own mouth (see Acts 21:8-10).

No man could frame a sentence in any language that would show any more conclusively than does this one that the baptism here administered was by immersion. The type of comment that can deny immersion here is fraudulent.

Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. -- The meaning of the Greek word *baptizo* (to baptize) is "to immerse." The Ethiopian would have laid aside his outer garments on the bank, descended till he was about chest-deep into the water, and would then have been plunged under it "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 10:48; Acts 19:5; Colossians 3:17). No other form of baptism except immersion was practiced for 200 or more years in the early Church.

The Ethiopian Treasurer's baptism is the climax Luke has been building up to.

÷Acts 8:39
Acts 8:39

When they came up out of the water, -- After Philip and the Ethiopian came up out the water something miraculous suddenly happened.

the Spirit of the Lord snatched [caught; carried; took away] Philip away; -- The Greek word, **ἥρπασεν (*harpazo*, G726)**, is variously translated *"snatched, caught up; carried away; took away*.'

Elijah (1 Kings 18:12; 2 Kings 2:16) and Ezekiel (Ezekiel 3:12-14; Ezekiel 8:3) were also snatched (transported) away a similar miraculous fashion. This miraculous exit of Philip was a powerful confirmation to the caravan that Philip was God's representative.

[See the note on "**was found"** in the next verse for an alternative understanding of the parting of Philip and the Ethiopian.]

and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing. -- The Treasurer never saw Philip after that; the Greeks says "for he went on his way rejoicing." If there are any feelings (experiences) connected with salvation, they follow, not precede, becoming a Christian. The Ethiopian's rejoicing sprang from the fact that his sins had been forgiven on the condition of his obedient faith.

Both the Gospel of Luke and Acts often emphasize this characteristic in the lives of believers (e.g., Luke 1:14; 24:52; Acts 5:41).

÷Acts 8:40
Acts 8:40

But Philip was found at Azotus, -- While the verb and emphasis on "was found" lends itself to a confirmation of a miraculous transport of Philip away from the Ethiopian's presence; a few commentaries see nothing more than a contrast in the text. The Ethiopian went on his way to Ethiopia, whereas Philip next preached in Azotus.

"Azotus" was the first-century name for the ancient Philistine city of Ashdod, located twenty miles north of Gaza.

and as he passed through he kept preaching the gospel to all the cities -- The plain of Sharon would be in this area, as are many towns along the sea coast, including Lydda and Joppa, mentioned in Acts 9:32 and Acts 9:36.

until he came to Caesarea. -- Philip moves on to proclaim the gospel up the Mediterranean coast. Caesarea had been a key city for Herod the Great, with a substantial Gentile population and a major port. "Caesarea" is where Philip and his family are found living in Acts 21:8-9 when he hosted Paul's company on their way to Jerusalem.

÷Acts 9:1
Acts 9:1

But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, -- "Still" recalls the record at Acts 7:58 and **Acts 8:1-3**. We do not know the length of time occupied by the events in Samaria and Philip's mission, but all during that interval the persecution continued.

The verb "**breathing**" is expressive of deep, agitating emotion, as when men breathe rapidly and violently under the weight of emotion. Every breath that Saul breathed encouraged him on to persecute the disciples of Christ.

While Saul may not have been the actual executioner ("**threats and murde**r"), but his arrests led the imprisonment and death of many in the church. (Acts 22:4; Acts 26:10; Galatians 1:13).

went to the high priest -- They had the authority through the power which the Great Sanhedrin claimed to exercise, in religious matters, over Jews even in foreign cities.

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EXAMPLES OF CONVERSION:

1. Pentecost- Acts 2:22 & Acts 2:36-47
2. Samaria- Acts 8:4-13
3. Ethiopian eunuch- Acts 8:26-39
4. Paul (Saul)- Acts 9:1-20 & Acts 22:6-16
5. Cornelius– Acts 10:1-48 & Acts 11:1-18
6. Lydia- Acts 16:13-15

7. Philippian jailer- Acts 16:23-34
8. Corinthians- Acts 18:8

What Paul Saw When Blind
(Some Things Paul Saw While Blind)
Acts 9:1-18

1. David said, *"It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes."* (Psalms 119:71.
2. I heard of a man, a very wicked fellow, going blind.
   A. To pass the time his little daughter read the Bible to him.
   B. He learned the Truth and obeyed the Gospel.
3. Pain and sorrow are not God's converting power but the Gospel it.
   A. Yet, sometimes there are blessings in darkness.
   B. The "Treasures of Darkness" (Illust. 87-At-Ha C-6)

4. Now let us consider what Paul saw while blind.

1. PAUL SAW THAT HE WAS A SINNER –1Tim. 1:15

1. 1 Timothy 1:15; Romans 3:23
2. One thing the Pharisee in Luke 18:9-14 could never see what that he was a sinner. V. 9.
3. The prodigal son was very frank to admit *"I have sinner against heaven..."* Luke 15:18.
4. Judas said, "*I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood. And they said, what is that to us, see thou to that."* Matthew 27:4

2. PAUL SAD THAT HE HAD BEEN RELIGIOUSLY WRONG

1. Acts 26:4-5 -- Paul had gloried in the strictness of the law he kept.
   A. Acts 22:3 – Paul was taught and was zealous toward the law of the fathers.
2. Many people think their religious was good enough for their father and is therefore good enough for them. Philippians 3:5-6.
3. We do not measure other things by this standard.
   A. The way my father traveled... Living standards... his salary, etc...
4. Paul could have reasoned that the religious of his fathers was older than that which began with Jesus. But Paul was not guided by that type of human reasoning.
   A. Galatians 1:11-12

3. PAUL SAW THAT CONSCIENCE WAS NOT A SAFE GUIDE.

1. Paul had always had a good conscience.
   A. Acts 23:1
2. One should always have a clear conscience, but conscience is not always a safe guide.
3. Conscience condemns, but good judgment restrains –
   A. 1 Peter 3:21.
4. I can think of no more lamentable condition than one have a seared conscience.
   A. 1 Timothy 4:2 *"speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,"* ***NKJV***
5. When Paul's conscience was properly taught he obeyed the truth.
   A. Acts 26:9; James 4:17; 1 John 3:20-21

4. PAUL SAW HE NEEDED HELP OUTSIDE OF HIMSELF

1. Acts 9:8
2. Men had to led him.
   A. He was going to let God led him henceforth.
3. We need God to led us.
   A. God sometimes helps us through others – such an Ananias vs. 10-12
   B. Romans 10:14 *"How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?"* ***NKJV***

5. PAUL SAW THAT MAN NEEDED MORE THAN BREAD ALONE – V. 9

1. Matthew 4:4 *"But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"*

2. Paul fasted – and true fasting means you are engaged in something else more important than eating.
   A. Acts 13:1-3 The church at Antioch.
   B. Jesus in Matthew 4:2.
      1) Jesus was probably praying and meditating
      2) "***Afterwards"*** he was an hunger – Matthew 4:2

6. PAUL SAW THAT PRAYER DID NOT SAVE – Acts 9:11

1. There is no teaching in the book of God where alien sinners are taught to pray for anything.
   A. Saul prayed for 3 days without it bringing salvation.
   B. The Publican in Luke 18 was in a covenant relationship with God already since he was a Jew.

2. All the needs of the alien sinner are supplied in the Word of God.
   A. Paul was told that one would come and tell him what he must do – Acts 9:6
3. Prayer is for the child of God.
   A. Solomon said, "*He that turneth his ear from hearing the law, his prayer shall be an abomination."* Proverbs 28:9
      B. 1 Peter 3:12 "*The eyes of the Lord are over the -- . "*

7. PAUL SAW THAT IT WAS NO DISGRACE TO CHANGE WHEN WRONG.

1. 2 Peter 3:9 "*God is longsuffering to us, not willing...."*
   Paul turned from being ....
   A. A Persecutor of the Way (Acts 26:10; Acts 9:1-2) to being
   B. A Preacher of the Way – Acts 9:20.

2. Paul changed out of conviction –

3. Acts 2:38 – Repentance

4. I have no doubt that many of us have changed over the years and will continue to change when we are convicted we are wrong on any point.

5. What is the motive of our change?

   A. Saul's motive was not for wealth, nor popularity, but of conviction.
   B. He had greater promise of wealth, power, and popularity in the Hebrew religions. Philippians 3:
   C. This kind of change is honorable in anyone.

8. PAUL SAW THAT AT BAPTISM SINS WERE WASHED AWAY

1. Acts 22:16 *"And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'* ***NKJV***

2. Members of the Lord's church have been accused of thinking that water washes sins away.
   A. I don't believe in "water" salvation – I believe in the power of the blood of Jesus Christ to save –
   Revelation 1:5 " *and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,"* ***NKJV***

3. But the blood of Christ washes sins away – Ephesians 1:7
Ephesians 1:7 *"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace"* ***NKJV***

4. The poet has said in a song:
   What can wash away my sins,
   Nothing but the blood of Jesus ."

5. We should all want to learn how and when we reach the blood of Jesus?
   A. Paul said "*We are baptized into his death"* – Romans 6:3-4
   B. Christ shed his blood in his death – John 19:34
   C. Romans 6 tells us that we reach the blood of Christ in baptism –

:Acts 9:2
Acts 9:2

and asked him for letters -- The high priest, as head of the Great Sanhedrin, was appealed by Saul for authority and documents that gave him authority and a commission to the rulers of foreign synagogues.

to the synagogues at Damascus, -- Damascus was an important commercial center and a key stop along the trade route between Egypt and Mesopotamia. It had a large Jewish population in the city.
As at Jerusalem, so in Damascus "the synagogues" were numerous, and occupied by different classes and nationalities.

so that if he found any belonging to the Way, -- An early name given to the community of believers who confessed Jesus as Messiah was "the Way."
This description of Christianity, derived from Jesus' description of Himself (John 14:6), appears several times in Acts (Acts 19:9; Acts 19:23; Acts 22:4; Acts 24:14; Acts 24:22).

men or women, -- We can see the fury that Saul raged against the Christians from this mention of the "women" as included among those whom he committed or desired to commit to prison. (Cp. Acts 8:3 and Acts 22:4.)

The women played a more conspicuous part among the early Christians than they were allowed to do among the Jews.

he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. -- Saul planned to use his authority from the Great Sanhedrin to bring about the extinction of this new teaching about Jesus being the Messiah.

He would be escorted back to Jerusalem in chains to be held in prison till they could be tried and then possibility executed for blasphemy. (Acts 26:11)

÷Acts 9:3
Acts 9:3

Now as he journeyed -- We have no way of knowing which of several possible routes Saul and his companions traveled. Artists have pictured him on horseback, camelback, or in a chariot, but we don't know. The caravan road was about 135 miles north-eastward to Damascus and usually took about six days.

he approached Damascus, -- The Greek reading is more full: "it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus." The party must have reached the near neighborhood of the city, for his companions (Acts 9:8) "led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus" after the vision.

and suddenly -- We are told in Acts 22:6 that the time of day was "about noon: and in Acts 26:13 that it was "mid-day" and the light was "above the brightness of the sun."

a light from heaven -- The light shined around Saul and those with him. But the appearance of Jesus Christ in His glory, was visible only to Saul (Acts 9:7).

flashed about him. -- Light suddenly, overwhelmingly enveloped Saul. It was in the midst of this glory that Christ was seen by Saul (1 Corinthians 15:8), so that he can count himself among those who had seen the Lord after His resurrection.

÷Acts 9:4
Acts 9:4

And he fell to the ground -- From Acts 26:14 we find that Saul and all his companions fell to the ground, dazzled by the intense brightness. More in the vision was made evident to Saul than to the others. (Acts 9:7)

This experience of Jesus' glory is so overwhelming that it forces Saul to the ground (compare Ezekiel 1:28; Daniel 10:9; Revelation 1:17).

and heard a voice saying to him, -- The Greek accusative case and then the genitive indicates that there was a difference in the hearing of Saul and his companions. They "heard" a sound but did not understand it. (Acts 9:7; Acts 22:9)

Paul heard the Lord speaking to him in Hebrew. (Acts 26:14)

"Saul, Saul, -- Jesus' repetition of Saul's name may suggest a sense of urgency or of compassion (compare Luke 10:41; Luke 22:31)

why do you persecute me?" -- In persecuting the Church, Saul was persecuting Jesus Himself. The emphasis in the Greek is on the word "me."

÷Acts 9:5
Acts 9:5

And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" -- Some wonder what did Saul imply by the use of "Lord"? 1) a title of respect, like "sir" (John 4:11); or, 2) the use of "LORD" like in the OT (Genesis 2:4).

I believe Saul is aware of the Divine nature of the vision, and shows this by his address "Lord."

The appearance of Jesus, though in a glorified body, is not recognized. We may almost certainly conclude that he had not seen or known Jesus during His ministerial life.

And he said, "I am Jesus, -- Jesus' response with the words "I am" (*ego eimi* in Greek), may be an allusion to Moses' encounter with Yahweh in the burning bush (Exodus 3:14).

In Acts 22:8 "I am Jesus of Nazareth." By using this name, and Saul already acknowledging Him as "Lord," Saul is realizing a terrible mistake he had made in his life.

whom you are persecuting; -- It is impossible for us who have heard the story of Jesus from infancy to fully realize the thoughts and feelings which flashed through the heart of Saul upon hearing these words.

> Up to this moment he had held Jesus to be an imposter, cursed of God and man, and His followers blasphemers worthy of death. But now this hated being is suddenly revealed to him in a blaze of divine glory. The evidence of eyes and ears cannot be doubted! There stands Jesus, with the light of heaven and the glory of God around Him, and He says, "I am Jesus." Stephen was right then, and I have shed innocent blood. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" - (McGarvey)

The majority text the NKJV uses has here as passage that is also found in Acts 26:14.
It *is* hard for you to kick against the goads." -- The expression "to kick against the goad" is derived from the action of a stubborn and unyielding ox kicking against the goad. As the ox would gain nothing by the struggle and would injure no one but itself by the kicking, it comes to denote an obstinate and refractory disposition and course of conduct.

What was Paul kicking against? Paul makes it clear that he had acted in all good conscience, even amidst his opposition to Christianity. In his effort to make men adhere to the Law of Moses he was kicking against the grace of God which had been revealed in Christ. Yet the more he kicks (i.e., persecutes), the more the church grows!

÷Acts 9:6
Acts 9:6

[**So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then the Lord *said* to him,**] Alternate Majority Text reading.

What wilt thou have me to do? -- A most important question!
Saul's question will be answered! After showing his repentance, by fasting and praying, he is give the command in Acts 22:16; Acts 9:18;

but rise -- Paul had fallen down and had continued prostrate.

Christ appeared to Paul **(1)** To make him a minister and a witness of the things that would be subsequently revealed to him by God, (Acts 26:16) and **(2)** to qualify him to be an apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 1:22; Acts 26:17-18).

and enter the city, -- The party of travelers had nearly arrived in Damascus already.

and you will be told what you are to do." -- The experience on the road was the turning point in Paul's life, but it did not make him a Christian. He was subdued, but not saved from his sins.

Even Paul understood that there was something for him to do other than acknowledge the fact of the presence and power of Christ. Furthermore, Jesus is going to tell him to go into the city, and there it would be told him what to do to be saved.

÷Acts 9:7
Acts 9:7

And the men who journeyed with him -- Saul was not only furnished with authority, but also with men who were to carry out his intentions and bring the prisoners to Jerusalem.

stood speechless, -- The word "stood" here means "to stay in place, remained fixed". They too had fallen to the ground (Acts 26:14).

hearing a voice but seeing no one. -- (Daniel 10:7). Paul's companions heard the voice but did not understand it (Acts 22:9). Jesus spoke in Hebrew to Saul, but this doesn't necessarily mean they men didn't understand Hebrew, just that they didn't understand the one speaking to Saul.

÷Acts 9:8
Acts 9:8

Saul rose from the ground, -- At the conclusion of the vision Saul was able to rise up from the ground.

and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. -- The power of his eyes had been taken away. After this encounter with Christ he was physically blinded for a period, but his spiritual eyes were wide open!

So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. -- Saul's companions still retained their sight and led their leader in their mission of persecution on into the city.

÷Acts 9:9
Acts 9:9

And for three days -- The three days are likely to be understood according to the Jewish way of counting time, as including the rest of the day he arrived, the entire day following, and the portion of the day after that till the arrival of Ananias.

he was without sight, -- The purpose of the blindness seems to be to bring Saul into contact with one who would heal him and teach him further what to do and to learn the mission the Lord now had for Saul.

and neither ate nor drank. -- He is overwhelmed because of his sins and in prayer (Acts 9:11) so intense that he gives no thought to any physical needs. Saul's fasting and praying Acts 9:11 infer his repentance Acts 2:38.

This refutes the misconception that Saul was "saved on the road" to Damascus. The reaction to being saved and receiving forgiveness is to "rejoice" (Acts 8:39); Acts 8:8; Acts 13:52). Saul realizes he is still yet in his sins. He receives a vision and is waiting for a man named "Ananias" coming to heal him of his blindness and tell him what he must do (Acts 9:6).

÷Acts 9:10
Acts 9:10

9:10–19 *Through Jesus' words to Ananias, the significance of Paul's experience on the road to Damascus is revealed.*

Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. -- We have no further mention of Ananias in the NT except in Acts 22:12, where Paul describes him as "a devout man according to the Law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt" at Damascus.

We don't know if he had become a disciple during the life of Jesus, or was among the Jewish converts on the day of Pentecost or at some subsequent time.

From the fact that he is called upon to perform a miracle in healing Saul's blindness (Acts 9:12) we can conclude that an apostle had laid hands on him and he had been enabled to do this. (See note on Acts 8:6).

The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." -- The Lord calls Ananias by name. As Saul had been prepared for the visit by a vision, so Ananias is by a vision instructed to go to him.

And he said, "Here I am, Lord." -- This is a Jewish idiom expressing one's availability (cf. Isaiah 6:8; Genesis 22:1; 1 Samuel 3:4, 1 Samuel 3:6-8, etc.). Verse 11 is obviously verbal because it is very specific instruction.

÷Acts 9:11
Acts 9:11

And the Lord said to him, "Rise -- He is told to "arise" from his vision. We conclude that after Ananias' conversation with the Lord he obeyed directly without delay the command the Lord now gives him (Acts 9:17).

and go to the street called Straight, -- The Greek word "street" speaks of a narrow lane (as in Luke 14:21). It is not the word for "broad thoroughfare" that we met in Acts 5:15.

and at the house of Judas -- We know nothing more of this Judas. He may have been one of the Jews who spoke well of Ananias (Acts 22:12), and a man Ananias would also know, and would know where he lived.

look for a man of Tarsus -- Tarsus was the birthplace of Paul and a key city in the Roman province of Cilicia. It served as both a commercial and educational center. Its university ranked with those of Athens and Alexandria as the finest in the Roman world.

named Saul, -- The Lord identifies the man by name that Ananias is to heal of his blindness.

for behold, he is praying, -- The fact that Paul was praying is an inference of his repentance (Acts 2:38).

÷Acts 9:12
Acts 9:12

and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias -- The Lord confirmed his earlier words to Saul (Acts 9:6). He also confirms that Saul, in a vision of his own, has seen Ananias by name coming to him. Saul has the answer to his prayer.

Perhaps Saul's vision was simultaneous with the one that Ananias had; i.e., Jesus appeared to Saul and to Ananias at the same time. Saul is now eagerly expecting a visit from this stranger Ananias.

come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." -- Saul then has this assurance from the Lord that he will soon regain his sight. No doubt Ananias was one of those upon whom the apostles had laid their hands (in order to impart to him spiritual gifts), and thus he had the power to be able to correct the blindness of Paul. (Acts 8:14-18.)

÷Acts 9:13
Acts 9:13

But Ananias answered, -- In the Greek there is a "but" - "but Ananias answered." Ananias didn't want to have anything to do with Paul.

"Lord, I have heard from many about this man, -- Ananias speaks of Saul's persecuting career in Jerusalem as a matter of hearsay. This would infer that he was not one of those who fled from Jerusalem because of the persecution that arose after the death of Stephen. He must have been a Christian before that.

many -- The "many" would be citizens in Damascus that knew of Saul's mission to the city. From Acts 9:21 we learn that Saul's mission was generally known by those in the synagogues. Perhaps Saul's traveling companions had three days to spread this news.

how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. -- Here we find the earliest use of the name "saint," a term that came to be a regular name for the Christians still living on earth. (cf. Romans 1:7; Romans 12:13; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Corinthians 16:1; etc.)

The term "saints" *hagioi* (plural) is from *hagios*. The word can also be translated "separated" or "set-apart one." The "saint" is set apart by God from the world for His service when he becomes a Christians. In another sense "sanctification" is an on-going process (1 Thessalonians 5:23) of growing to be holy like God wants His children to be. The term "saints" is always plural in the NT, except one time in Philippians 4:21, but even there it is in a plural context.

÷Acts 9:14
Acts 9:14

and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind -- One doesn't need to wonder how Ananias knew this, for we learn from Acts 9:21 that Saul's mission was general knowledge in all the Damascus synagogues.

all who call upon thy name." -- See **1 Corinthians 1:2** To "call upon the name" is to turn to Christ in faith and obedience to the Good News He brought to mankind. (**Acts 2:21**; **Matthew 7:21**).

÷Acts 9:15
Acts 9:15

But the Lord said to him, -- When the Lord gives a command, "No" is not the answer He wants to hear.

"Go, -- Jesus repeated his instructions to Ananias to "Go" adding a word of explanation.

for he is a chosen instrument of mine -- The word for "instrument" here means a valuable container. Saul will be filled with the Gospel of Christ and bear it to others far and wide.
Paul himself uses this figure in 2 Corinthians 4:6-7.

to carry my name before the Gentiles -- Saul would take Jesus' name to the "Gentiles." This designation is the first time Gentiles are specifically mentioned in the text as part of God's plan. However, Jesus had earlier revealed this mission to Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts 26:16-18).

and kings and the sons of Israel; -- Saul would appear before Herod Agrippa (Acts 25:23-26) and Nero's court (Acts 25:11-12; 2 Timothy 4:16-17), and before many other Roman officials, as well as before the Sanhedrin and Jewish officials.

Paul began his ministry preaching in Jewish synagogues Acts 14:1; Acts 17:1, Acts 17:10; Acts 18:4; Acts 19:8), but his primary calling was to Gentiles (Romans 11:13; Romans 15:16).

÷Acts 9:16
Acts 9:16

for I will show him how much he must suffer -- Jesus tells Ananias, Paul has made others suffer for Christ; he had persecuted them even unto death. Now he is to suffer as he had caused others to suffer. This prediction was fully carried out, (Acts 20:23; 2 Corinthians 11:16-33; 2 Timothy 1:11-12.)

for the sake of my name." -- Paul's preaching and suffering was all in regard to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

÷Acts 9:17
Acts 9:17

So Anani'as departed and entered the house. -- The vision ended, and Ananias did not say "no" again, but departed for the house of Judas on Straight Street.

And laying his hands on him he said, -- The blinding was supernatural, and so was the restoration of sight. In all that Ananias did and said, he was the agent of the Lord. It was if Jesus Himself were speaking an acting.

"Brother Saul, -- The term "brother" does not prove that Saul was already saved. It was common for Jews, even Christian Jews, to address fellow Jews as "brethren" (Acts 22:1).

the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came, -- Ananias makes it clear to Saul that the same "Lord Jesus" who had appeared to him on the road had sent him to Saul.

has sent me that you may regain your sight -- Ananias' mission was to heal Saul's blindness. See the next verse.

and be filled with the Holy Spirit." -- At what point Saul was baptized with the Holy Spirit is not clear. It was not Ananias's doing that either made Paul an apostle or revealed the Gospel to him, Galatians 1:1; Galatians 1:11-12.

Paul's was made an apostle by Christ, and received revelation of the truth from Him (Ephesians 3:1-8). In a three year time period, apparently between verses 22 and verse 23, while Paul was in Araba he had more visions and revelation of the Gospel from the Lord. (Galatians 1:17-18; Ephesians 3:1-8; cf. 2 Corinthians 12:2-3).

÷Acts 9:18
Acts 9:18

And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes -- This is a technical medical term for the flaking of skin from a wound Luke uses to describe what happened to Paul's eyes in this moment of healing. The word scales is used of fish scales in the Septuagint (cf. Leviticus 11:9-10; Leviticus 11:12; Deuteronomy 14:9).

The metaphorical extension can be seen in Numbers 16:38, where it is used of flattened metal plates. In this context they were probably flakes of skin or crust which oozed from Paul's eyes. - Utley

The CBSC says "The word rendered "scales" is used as a technical term for a disease of the eye by Hippocrates, and the verb derived from it is found (Tobit 11:13, RSVA) used of the cure of a disease of similar character. "And the whiteness pilled away from the corners of his eyes." This "whiteness" is rendered in the margin (Tobit 2:10 RSVA) "white films," and was clearly something like the "scales" which caused Saul's blindness, and a process for the cure thereof is called (Tobit 3:17) "to scale away the whiteness of Tobit's eyes."

and he regained [recovered] his sight. -- This miracle was done with the "laying" on of Ananias' hands as directed by Jesus.

Then he rose and was baptized, -- In the fuller account (Acts 22:16) we learn that the exhortation to be baptized was part of the message with which Ananias was charged, and so was divinely commissioned to give to Saul (see Acts 22:10). (Acts 8:36; Acts 8:38).

NT baptism was an act of obedience to Jesus' example (cf. Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22) and command (cf. Matthew 28:19.) It marks a change of ownership and change of one's relationship with Christ, (Galatians 3:26-27).

See Acts 9:1 notes for "What Saul Saw While Blind."

÷Acts 9:19
Acts 9:19

and took food and was strengthened. -- It had been three days since Jesus appeared to him and he had eaten nothing. His fasting indicates he had been overwhelmed with a sense of his sins. Now with baptism for the forgiveness of his sins that that burden and remorse is gone, and he takes food.

For several days -- We know that before Luke tells of Saul escaping from Damascus, there is an interval of three years (**Galatians 1:17-18**; **Galatians 1:12**; **Galatians 2:2**; **Ephesians 1:17**; **Ephesians 3:3**).

1) Lightfoot is among those who think that Paul left immediately to Arabia after his conversion, and experience the revelations he received from Christ and then returned to Damascus and preached in the synagogues, verse 20 following.

2) Meyer and others think Saul's departure for Arabia should be positioned at the end of verse 22, and the plot against his life after he returned to Damascus propelled his departure from there.

he was with the disciples at Damascus. -- Verses 20 -22 informs us of what Saul did "immediately" (Acts 9:20) while he fellowshiped with the Damascus disciples.

÷Acts 9:20
Acts 9:20

And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, -- The zeal Saul had used to persecute Jesus' disciples, he now uses to preach Jesus in the synagogues.

Since "**synagogues**" is in the plural we understand he went around to different Sabbath day meeting in the various synagogues and probably conveyed his story of seeing Jesus on the road and his blindness and healing.

It later became Paul's practice to go first to the Jewish synagogues in the cities he visited to preach Christ to them before turning to share the message with the Gentiles.

It was customary for the synagogue ruler to invite distinguished guests to address the assembled worshipers (cf. Luke 4:15-17). This provided Saul/Paul with an audience that already knew the history of Israel and the Holy Scriptures.

saying, "He is the Son of God." -- Saul had heard much about the Christ from Stephen and those he persecuted. Now he could be a witness himself that Jesus was resurrected and now in heaven with the Father.

Son of God -- The ultimate Israelite and descendant of David, the Messiah, is identified as God's Son (Psalms 2:7). Cf. Galatians 1:16; Galatians 2:20.

÷Acts 9:21
Acts 9:21

And all who heard him were amazed -- Their amazement is easy to understand. They see a 180 degree turn-around in this man.

and said, "Is not this the man who made havoc [destroyed] in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? -- Saul's fame as a persecutor of Christians was well known to the Jews of Damascus, and the authorities of the synagogues may have been instructed beforehand to welcome him as a zealous agent.

We should gather also from the strong expression "**made havo**c" ["destroyed"] used to describe Saul's career in Jerusalem, (Acts 8:3) that the slaughter of the Christians there had not been limited to the stoning of Stephen. Acts 8:1-4.

And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priest?" -- The Jewish sector of Damascus had become aware of why Paul had left Jerusalem and come to their city. If Saul's mission had been secret, perhaps those who had traveled with him, and who led him to Judas' house on Straight Street, had informed everyone of their mission. He, who intended to destroy those of "the way," was now preaching in behalf of Christ and His Church! Astounding!

Those who change their lives for the Lord can expect close examination and criticism.

÷Acts 9:22
Acts 9:22

But Saul increased all the more in strength, -- Verse 19 (Acts 9.19) tells of Saul receiving food and being strengthen from fasting, so we should conclude that what Saul increases here in "spiritual strength."

Saul's continued association with the Damascus disciples helped him to grow spiritually. His own understanding of how Jesus fulfilled the great prophetic passages of the Messiah gave strength to his preaching of Jesus.

and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus -- "Confounded" is one translation of the word ***sugchuno***, and would mean that Paul bested them in the discussion over the Old Testament Scriptures and the identity of Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah.

The word can also mean "tumult" or "excitement," so that it is possible that Saul, by his preaching, did exactly the same thing in Damascus that Stephen did by preaching in the synagogues at Jerusalem. The unbelieving Jews were not able to meet his arguments.

by proving that Jesus was the Christ.

See note at Acts 9:19 : Saul spent three years in Arabia, about the same length of time that Jesus spent with the other apostles teaching and preparing them for their commission. Paul received his instructions from the Lord by revelation and then returned to Antioch. So somewhere between vs. 19 and vs. 23 there is a three year interval. Galatians 1:17-18; Galatians 1:12; Galatians 2:2; Ephesians 1:17; Ephesians 3:3; 1 Corinthians 11:23.

÷Acts 9:23
Acts 9:23

When many days had passed, -- See the note at Acts 9:19 about the the three year time Saul spent in Arabia. Luke simply tells us that "many days had elapsed." The exact place in Arabia where Saul went to is in dispute.

It was during this time that Paul was receiving revelations from God that determined his preaching. Galatians 1:11 and following verses Paul tells us about the trip to Arabia, has this as its thesis that he did not get his gospel from men, but by direct revelation from God. The implication is that many of the revelations about Jesus that he received happened while he was in Arabia. It is also very possible that Paul spent much of the time there preaching and evangelizing. (**Galatians 1:17-18**; **Galatians 1:12**; **Galatians 2:2**; **Ephesians 1:17**; **Ephesians 3:3**; **1 Corinthians 11:23**).

the Jews plotted to kill him, -- After Saul returned to Damascus there was a Jewish plot to assassinate Saul. Not being able to defeat the message, they decided to kill the messenger.

÷Acts 9:24
Acts 9:24

but their plot became known to Saul. -- As was often the case, Paul or his friends learned of threats against him. (cf Acts 23:15-18; Acts 9:30; Acts 19:31).

There was probably some sympathetic acquaintance to the Christians that conveyed the plot to them.

They were watching the gates -- Not only were the Jews involved in the plot again Saul, but in 2 Corinthians 11:32 we learn the governor over Damascus at the time was attempting to seize him also.

Theory #1. The Arabian [Nabeatean] King Aretas has just recently captured Damascus, and it may be that the governor he appointed was a Jew.

Theory #2. King Aretas, or the governor he set over the city, were bribed by the Damascus Jews to use his soldiers (gate guards) in the hunt for Saul. It may be that he cooperated freely with the rich influencial Jews of the city.

Damascus was a walled city with the houses built against the wall with the upper stories often projecting beyound the top of the wall and containing windows. The gates, well positiong to protect the city, were the only conventional means of exiting the city.

day and night, to kill him; -- They were constant in their watch for Saul, and their intention was to eradicate him.

÷Acts 9:25
Acts 9:25

but his disciples -- "His disciples" likely refers to some who became Christians because of Saul's preaching.

took him by night -- 2 Corinthians 11:33. One source, who was familiar with customs in some Eastern cities, suggests that "Paul was let down in a garbage basket. People put their garbage out in baskets like this, expecting it to be picked up the next morning; thus no one would be suspicious of a basket being lowered down the side of the wall. Then, when it was dark enough, Paul could make his way out of the basket and down the road." - (Reese -footnote #133 on Acts 9:25).

and let him down over the wall, -- The escape of the spies from Jericho, as described in Joshua 2:15, was exactly in the same way, except that they had only a rope to descend by, whereas Saul had a rope-basket (see also 1 Samuel 19:12).

lowering him in a basket. -- The basket here mentioned (*spuris*) is the same that is spoken of (Matthew 15:37) at the feeding of the four thousand in the mountain district west of the Sea of Galilee. It appears to have been large basket made of rope, fit for carrying a large quantity of miscellaneous articles.

The baskets (*cophinoi*) spoken of at the feeding of the five thousand (Matthew 14:20) were such as the multitude, which in that case had followed Jesus on foot out of the cities, would be likely to carry in their hands.

÷Acts 9:26
Acts 9:26

And when he had come to Jerusalem -- Saul had not visited Jerusalem since the day when he set out three years before on his inquisitorial journey to Damascus, and he would only be known at that time to the Christians as their determined enemy.

he attempted to join the disciples; -- When a Jew went to a great city of the Roman empire where Jews were numerous, his first thought would be to search out his co-religionists. So Saul/Paul acts this way now; he seeks to join the Christian community. But his own language (Galatians 1:16-18) shows that he had made no previous attempt to spread the news of his changed feelings among the congregations of believers.

and they were all afraid of him, -- An absence of any news of Saul's change of behavior toward Jesus' disciples left the Jerusalem disciples skeptical of him.

for they did not believe that he was a disciple. -- It seems the Jerusalem believers steered clear of Saul, rememberding his former violence against them.

They may have considered any letters of commendation from the brethren in Damascus, if he had any, were forged.

Acts records several of Paul's visits to Jerusalem after his dramatic conversion.

1. Acts 9:26, first visit
2. Acts 11:30, relief visit
3. Acts 12:25, after mission
4. Acts 15:2, Jerusalem Council
5. Acts 18:22, brief visit with the church
6. Acts 21:17, visit that resulted in his arrest

÷Acts 9:27

Acts 9:27

B**ut Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, --** Barnabas, who was already well known and respected (Acts 4:36-37; Acts 11:22-24), had listened to Saul's story and gives Saul credibility with the church and its leadership.

Some have conjected that Barnabas may have known Saul in the past, but this is not definite. But one stepped up, and it made a difference.

Saul wanted to visit with the church leaders of Jerusalem but only managed to see Peter and James in his fifteen days there (Galatians 1:18-19).

and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, -- Barnabas learned the story of Saul' conversion and related it to the Jerusalem disciples. It is worthy of notice in how many forms the statement of the appearance of Jesus to Saul is repeated.

who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. -- Whether Barnabas' knowledge of Saul's activity was derived from Saul himself or from other sources we are not told. Being a prophet himself (Acts 13:1; cf. Acts 15:35) the Lord may have revealed this to him.

:Acts 9:28
Acts 9:28

So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, -- Similar language is used to describe Jesus' life and ministry among the disciples (Acts 1:21, "Jesus went in and out among us"). It was an idiom to describe a close association of friends.

:Acts 9:29
Acts 9:29

preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. -- Saul continues the same activities he had been engaged in while at Damascus.

And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists; -- The Hellenists were the Greek-Jews like those (if not the very same ones) who had instigated the attack against Stephen (at that time led by Saul himself.)

> "Paul appears to be right in the same synagogue where he before had debated with Stephen." - Reese.

The very same word "disputed" is here used which described the controversy with Stephen (Acts 6:9), and it is found nowhere else in this book. But it is interesting to note that the attack is now reversed. The Hellenists disputed with Stephen, now Saul disputes with them.

but they were seeking to kill him. -- They are ready to treat Saul like they did Stephen (Acts 7:58), and like the Damascus Jews intended to do (Acts 9:24).

It is interesting to notice how often when opponents cannot refute the message, they decided to get rid of the messenger.

Paul, in his own words tells of the time when the Jews were plotting against his life in Acts 22:17-21. The Lord in a vision (trance) told him to "Make haste, and get quickly out of Jerusalem."

:Acts 9:30
Acts 9:30

And when the brethren knew it, -- The disciples at Jerusalem somehow learned of the plot against Saul like those of Damascus had learned of the plot against him in that city. (See note at Acts 9:24).

they brought him down to Caesarea, -- Caesarea was the capital of the Roman province of Judea and the home-base of the Roman procurator. It served as the headquarters of a large Roman garrison and had an important port on the Mediterranean Sea.

and sent him off to Tarsus. -- Tarsus was the birth city of Paul (Acts 22:3). His friends seem to think that Saul will be safer there in his home town.

Subsequent events in Paul's life lead some to the conjecture that his parents did not accept him when he arrived home to Tarsus, but rather disinherited him when they found out he had

become a Christian. Philippians 3:8 indicates that he "suffered the loss of all things," but it may be saying too much to affirm that he was disinherited when the only proof is Philippians 3:8.

Paul did have a sister in Jerusalem who must have been friendly to him, at least her son was a friend to Paul (Acts 23:16).

One chronology of Paul's life put together these dates:
AD 34 Paul's conversion
AD 37 He returns from Arabia to Damascus, Jerusalem, Tarsus
AD 40 or 42 Paul in Antioch of Syria
AD 37-42 silent years

At a later time, Paul gives a short record of his sufferings, and few of these events are accounted for in the book of Acts (2 Corinthians 11:24-32). Of the things recounted in that record, we know of only one shipwreck, but he had been in two others that we know nothing about. And when and where did he spend the night and day in the ocean before he was rescued? We know of one of the times he was scourged, but he speaks of five. Where and when did he almost drown in crossing rivers?

:Acts 9:31
Acts 9:31

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Sama'ria -- The congregations of believers throughout the area made up one "church" or "one body" (Ephesians 4:4-5, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, Colossians 3:15).

had peace -- The "peace" seems to indicate an easing of the persecution in all this area, but it could refer primarily to the church's contentment in the face of persecution, or to their internal unity and camaraderie.

A stricter Roman governor and the expansion of Herod Agrippa's authority is understood as restricting the persecution.

The cause of this peace for the Christians seems to be that the attention of the Jews was turned from them to resisting the attempt made by Caligula (Josephus, Antiquities, XVIII. 8. 2) to have his statue erected in the Temple at Jerusalem. This profanation was averted partly by the determined opposition of the Jews, and partly by the intercession of King Agrippa with the Emperor.

It was not till the emperor Caligula was assassinated in AD 41 that they were delivered from this threat. Then the persecution of the church began again (Acts 12:1).

and was built up; -- Despite the persecution, the church was strengthened and growing both in number and in maturity. Some commentators believe this word is shorthand for the idea that more formal leadership like elders and deacons began to function.

and walking in the fear of the Lord -- The word "walking" often is used to denote Christian conduct and manner of life. The Christians lived in great respect and reverence for God.

and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit -- In Acts 4:36, it is noted that this word "comfort" includes also the ideas of encouragement and exhortation. Thus, the meaning of this phrase is that the words of counsel and encouragement came from Holy Spirit inspired men. The Holy Spirit

spoke through NT prophets who were agents in the growth and expansion of the church. (See the note at 2 Peter 1:21.)

it was multiplied. -- (cf. Acts 4:4). The church was growing in numbers.

Notice the items Luke chooses to mention.
1. peace in all churches
2. growing and increasing
3. comfort from the Spirit

What a change from the persecution of Acts 8:1!

÷Acts 9:32
Acts 9:32

Luke now turns the history from Saul to Peter.

Now as Peter went here and there among them all, -- Like Philip (Acts 8:40), Peter proclaims the good news along the Mediterranean coast. The phrase "went here and there" is another idiom of "traveling." Peter was traveling around in this area.

Apparently all the apostles stayed in Jerusalem through the times of persecution (Acts 8:1), but now with peace they were preaching throughout the towns of Judea, and even into Samaria and neighboring countries.

he came down also to the saints that lived at Lydda. -- Lydda was located about ten miles inland southeast from Joppa. It was a busy hub at this time servicing roads from Egypt to Syria, and from Joppa to Jerusalem.

The term "**saints**" is used in the book of Acts to describe the church. The term "disciples" is gradually replace by the term "saints" which mean "holy" or "set apart" for God's service.

The term is always in the plural except in Philippians 4:21, and even then this shows that to be a saint means to be "in community" with "holy people" who are "set apart" from the world and dedicated to God's service.

÷Acts 9:33
Acts 9:33

There he found a man named Aene'as, -- From the Greek name, Aeneas, we think he likely was a Hellenistic Jew. Whether he was a believer or unbeliever is uncertain, but apparently Peter is revisiting the established churches started by Philip.

who had been bedridden -- The word for "bed" refers to the little pallets used by the poorer people.

for eight years -- The Greek phrase can mean "since eight years old."* The length of time he has been bedridden establishes the miraculous nature of his cure.

and was paralyzed. -- A paralyzed man could have no way of earning a living and would likely be in great poverty, which would add to his suffering.

* (CF. Newman and Nida, *A Translator's Handbook on The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 199).

÷Acts 9:34
Acts 9:34

And Peter said to him, "Aene'as, Jesus Christ heals you; -- Peter claimed no power to perform the miracle himself. Compare Acts 3:6.

rise and make your bed." -- This would show his healing was complete. He was commanded to get up from the pallet, and take care of it in the manner in which beds were arranged when they were not in use during the daytime. The man was probably already at home.

And immediately he rose. -- This would show his healing was complete. He was commanded to get up from the pallet, and take care of it in the manner in which beds were arranged when they were not in use during the daytime.

÷Acts 9:35
Acts 9:35

And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, -- What the people saw was likely a very excited and joyful man! News of the miracles reached all the people of the area. They were well aware of the miracle being from God.

and they turned to the Lord. -- The primary purpose of miracles was to confirm the Word (Hebrews 2:3-4). When the people of Lydda and the surrounding area saw Aeneas standing and walking, and learned the source of the miracle, "they turned to the Lord."

This phrase stands for the entire process of hearing the gospel, coming to faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior, turning in repentance to forsake a life of sin to lived in a way that will please the Lord, and respond to the Lord in obedience be being baptized.

÷Acts 9:36
Acts 9:36

Now there was at Joppa -- The scene shifts from Lydda to twelve miles to the west, to the seacoast town of Joppa. The town is known as Jaffa today and is a suburb of Tel Aviv.

a disciple -- Dorcas is called a "disciple" and it can be seen that under the gospel there is no distinction between male and female (Galatians 3:28). The word for "female disciple" (*mathetria*) occurs only here in the NT, though the grammatical construction, "a certain female disciple" (rather than "the female disciple"), suggests that Tabitha was not the only female disciple in Joppa.

named Tabitha, which means Dorcas. -- Both of these names mean "antelope, little gazelle, or fawn." She was likely a Jewish believer who also had a Greek version of her name.

She was full of -- ***"Full of"*** is a favorite form of expression with Luke. Cf. the KJV, & NKJV where we read "Stephen full of faith and power" (Acts 6:8); Dorcas, "full of good works and acts of charity" (Acts 9:36); Elymas, "full of all subtilty" (Acts 13:10); and the Ephesians "full of wrath" (Acts 19:28). The sense is "given up to" or "devoted to."

good works and acts of charity. -- In literature of that time the "acts of charity" (ε᾽λεημοσυ΄νη, *eleemosyne, G1654*) has a special reference to "almsgiving" to the poor and needy, but it came to have a more general meaning of "kind deeds."

F.F. Bruce translated the sentence this way: "She spent all her time in the performance of good works and acts of kindness."

÷Acts 9:37
Acts 9:37

In those days -- The days here meant are those while Peter was traveling about in those parts. (See note on Acts 9:32.)

she fell sick and died; -- She suffered an unspecified sickness that resulted in her death.

and when they had washed her, -- The usual proceedings that followed her death, the washing of the body, are evidence of its reality. Usually a body was buried the same day one died (Acts 5:5-6).

they laid her -- While it was customary to bury a body immediately, the believers in Joppa had another plan. It seems probably that the reason for deferring the burial was the knowledge that Peter was near by (Acts 9:38), and the power of Jesus and His apostles the hope of the disciples was for a notable miracle.

in an upper room. -- This arrangement was similar to that of the upstairs room in Acts 1:13; Luke 22:12; Acts 20:8. Such an upper chamber was much more private and quiet.

> Whether this was intentional with Luke or not, the location of an upper room creates an echo with the miracles of two of Israel's great prophets (Elijah and Elisha) and Jesus' miracles (1 Kings 17:19; 2 Kings 4:10-11; Luke 4:25-27; Luke 8:49-56).

÷Acts 9:38
Acts 9:38

Since Lydda was near Joppa, -- Lydda was located about ten miles inland southeast from Joppa which was a seacoast town. The town is known as Jaffa today and is a suburb of Tel Aviv. (See note Acts 9:32, and Acts 9:36.)

the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, -- Without doubt they had heard of the healing of Aeneas (Acts 9:35) which took place in Lydda only ten miles away.

sent two men to him entreating him, "Please come to us without delay." -- Have other dead been raised by Peter? If so, there is no record of such. But it is possible there have been some, else where did the conviction arise that he could help in Dorcas' case?

Dorcas's body had been washed, as was done in preparation for burial, but there was no burial. She was laid in an upper room, as if they were hoping, or expecting a miracle.

The men seem to make the supplication, "We have heard of the mighty works which Jesus has done by your hands; extend your journey to Joppa, for we are in great need."

It may be that we are seeing in Joppa something of the results of Philip's preaching. Philip, who had been one of those chosen to wait on the widows at Jerusalem in Acts ch. 6.

÷Acts 9:39
Acts 9:39

So Peter rose and went with them. -- It seems the two men who had traveled hours to find Peter now turn around and go right back, with Peter accompanying them.

And when he had come, they took him to the upper room. -- Without delay they take Peter to where Dorcas is laid out. Why an upper room? It was probably the larger guest chamber.

All the widows stood beside him weeping, -- Whether Dorcas was also a widow is not clear. Were these widows also in Dorcas' sewing group? It seems they are "standing beside" Peter showing him the garments they are wearing which Dorcas had made for them? (The verb "showing" is in the middle voice.)

They are in mourning, and the "weeping" is audible. When James defined "pure and undefiled religion," he said the starting place was "to visit (from *episkeptomai*) does not mean "to go to see," but rather, "to see what is needed and then to *supply* what is needed."

and showing tunics and other garments which Dorcas made while she was with them. -- Are the widows wearing the garments Dorcas had made them, or are they on display? She had been an important blessing to her community.

The "tunics" (*chitōnas*) were shirt-like undergarments, while the "other garments" (*himatia*) were the outer robes, or mantles.

÷Acts 9:40
Acts 9:40

But Peter put them all outside -- Why put them out? We wonder if Peter is remembering the way Jesus did it? How did Peter know he could do this? Had it done it before? Luke also recorded the healing of Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:51-56) and he makes sure we recognize the similarity.

and knelt down and prayed; -- Also see the note on Acts 9:37 and similarity with the great prophets (Elijah and Elisha) and Jesus' miracles (1 Kings 17:19; 2 Kings 4:10-11; Luke 4:25-27; Luke 8:49-56).

One may wonder why Peter decided to raise Dorcas from the dead, and not Stephen? She was a good woman, but good women before had died and were not raised? All we can say is that it served God's purpose and gory to raise Dorcas on this occasion.

then turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, rise." -- Perhaps Peter remembered what Jesus did next. Jesus had said, "*Talitha, kum!"* that is, "Little girl arise!" (Mark 5:41; Luke 8:54, NASB 1977). Turning to the body, Peter said "**Tabitha, arise**." Only one letter different between the Aramaic word for "little girl" (*Talitha*) and the Aramaic word *Tabitha*.

Since "Tabitha" means "little gazelle" the similarity is even stronger: Jesus said, "Little *girl*, arise," while Peter said, "Little *gazelle* arise." Peter's words even sounded like what Jesus had said.

And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. -- Like all other NT miracles, this one was immediate, complete, and convincing.

÷Acts 9:41
Acts 9:41

And he gave her his hand and lifted her up. -- In Mark 5:41, and Luke 8:54, Jesus had taken Jairus' daughter by the hand, and Peter gave Dorcas "his and and raised her up" (ESV)/

Then calling the saints and widows he presented her alive. -- She had been dead just a few moments before, and now she was living. It is almost as if Peter is introducing her to her friends.

These words make it evident that the petition sent to Peter had come from of the whole church at Joppa.

McGarvey says, "Peter ... came to weep with those who wept; he remained to rejoice with those who rejoiced."

÷Acts 9:42
Acts 9:42

And it became known throughout all Joppa, -- While the news of this miracle, like that of Aeneas Acts 9:35, became widely known, Jesus had instructed those at Jairus' house to kept the miracle quiet, Luke 8:56, apparently for his time had not yet come (John 7:6; John 7:8) to arouse the animosity of the religious leaders to the point to kill Him.

and many believed in the Lord. -- The results from the resurrection of Dorcas is like that mentioned following the raising of Lazarus, "Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him" (John 11:45).

The phrase **"believed in the Lord"** is similar to "turned to the Lord" (Acts 9:35; Acts 11:21), and encompasses the full process of one's committment to the Lord in obedience to His every command:

1. His command to repent of one's sins - Luke 13:3.
2. The command for men to confess his name -- Romans 10:9-10.
3. His command for believers to be baptized - Mark 16:15-16.

:Acts 9:43
Acts 9:43

And he stayed in Joppa for many days -- If "many days" in Acts 9:23 was Luke's expression for the three years Paul spent in Arabia, perhaps we can picture Peter staying a year or more in Joppa.

with one Simon, a tanner. -- A tanner is a person who converts hides into leather. Peter breaks down a cultural barrier by staying with a tanner, an occupation unclean by Jewish standards (Leviticus 5:2; Leviticus 11:24), because the tanner dealt with the skins of dead animals. The local synagogue probably shunned Simon.

At Acts 10:6 we learn that Simon's house is by the sea shore. Tanners' workshops were required by law to be kept at a distance of 50 cubits from the walls of any town because it was a smelly business.

If a tanner, about to marry, kept his trade a secret from his fiancée until after they were married, the contract of marriage could be voided by the wife, since the house of a tanner was so repulsive to the strict Jew.

It seems an indication that some prejudices of the Jews were already becoming of small matter to Peter, when he makes his residence at the house of Simon a tanner. Such a step prepares us for the history of the next chapter, where he is instructed to go and preach to and baptize the Gentile Cornelius.

:Acts 10:1
Acts 10:1

At Caesarea -- Caesarea was the capital of the Roman province of Judea. It had a good seaport, and was an important commercial, cultural, and political city, being one of the great building achievements of Herod the Great. It was the headquarters of a large Roman garrison and the normal residence of the governor. At important Jewish festivals the Roman governor would reside for a time in Jerusalem. The city's population was a mixture of Romans, Greeks, and Jews.

there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion -- While Roman soldiers were generally consider rough, undisciplined, and worldly, every centurion mentioned in the NT seems very honorable (See Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:2-10; Mark 15:39). We are told by Roman historians that centurions were chosen for courage and loyalty.

This man has a Latin name, and like many career military men, had his family with him where he was stationed. We know nothing more historically about Cornelius though some have wondered if he was the honorable centurion who had built the synagogue for the Jews at Capernaum (Luke 7:5). Others have speculated he was the centurion who witnessed Jesus' crucifixion (Mark 15:39).

Cornelius, a centurion -- A centurion was a Company Commander over 100 men.
A Roman Cohort = 600 men, (A Band or Battalion);
A Roman Legion (Division) = 6,000 men or 10 cohorts.

of what was known as the Italian Cohort, -- A cohort was a regiment of between six hundred and a thousand men, composed of soldiers and their supporting staff. A cohort was then 1/10 of a

Roman Legion. While Cornelius was a centurion, the top ranking centurion in a cohort was commander over the entire Italian Cohort as well.

the Italian Cohort -- This phrase indicates that this particular regiment was recruited in Italy. While originally it consisted of Italians, their replacement in time was by men of other areas, but it retained its name and banners.

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EXAMPLES OF CONVERSION:

1. Pentecost- Acts 2:22 & Acts 2:36-47
2. Samaria- Acts 8:4-13
3. Ethiopian eunuch- Acts 8:26-39
4. Paul (Saul)- Acts 9:1-20 & Acts 22:6-16
5. Cornelius– Acts 10:1-48 & Acts 11:1-18
6. Lydia- Acts 16:13-15
7. Philippian jailer- Acts 16:23-34
8. Corinthians- Acts 18:8

÷Acts 10:2

Acts 10:2

This story must be very important. It is repeated three times - twice in this chapter and again in chapter 11.

a devout man who feared God -- "Devout... feared God" is a technical term for one who accepted God and the morals and ethics of Judaism without circumcision (Acts 10:22) and worshipped in the synagogue.

Later his servants described him as "a righteous and God-fearing man well spoken of by the entire nations of the Jews" (Acts 10:22).

A "God-fearer" was a Gentile who believed in Yahweh and embraced the moral and ethical standards of the Law.

with all his household, -- It is implied that Cornelius had instructed and influenced his family and servants, and trained them in the fear of God. It seems that Cornelius has been stationed in Caesarea for a while and has his family there with him.

gave alms liberally to the people, -- Usually the Jews and occupying Roman forces hated each other, so it is a contrast to find a Roman soldier who was liberal in his charity toward the occupied Jews. His "alms" show he was kind and one who loved his fellowman. One "not far from the kingdom" (Mark 12:34) of God, and a man of good report Acts 10:22. (Some have wondered if it could have been Cornelius when he was perhaps stationed at Capernaum that built the synagogue for the people there Luke 7:2-5.)

One of the primary meanings of the Greek word (*laos*) "people" is to designate the Jewish people, so the NASB does well in including the word "*Jewish*" in italics.

and prayed constantly to God. -- We learn from Acts 10:3; and Acts 10:30 that he observed the Jewish hours of prayer.

SINCERITY NOT ENOUGH
Paul was- Acts 23:1 & Acts 26:9-11, 1 Timothy 1:12-16, Acts 7:58-60 & Acts 8:1.
Cornelius was--- Acts 10:1-2 & Acts 11:13-14.
See also Proverbs 14:12, Luke 16:15, Isaiah 55:8-9.

÷Acts 10:3
Acts 10:3

About the ninth hour of the day -- Jews started counting time at daybreak, so the ninth hour of the day was about 3 p.m. (Acts 10:30). This was the hour of the evening sacrifices at the temple.

he saw clearly in a vision -- Suddenly "a man stood before him in shining garments" (Acts 10:30). It is emphasized that this was not something he imagined, he "clearly" saw the man with his eyes. The NIV says "he distinctly saw an angel."

an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius." -- The angel showed himself in human form in bright clothing (Acts 10:30). See the notes in Acts 1:10-11 when two men in white stood by the apostles at Jesus' ascension.

÷Acts 10:4
Acts 10:4

And he stared at him in terror, -- The sudden and unexpected appearance of the angel alarms him. The centurion rivets his eyes on the "man in bright clothing" (Acts 10:30), literally, "having fastened his eyes on him." The heavenly nature of the visitor is evident, and he was afraid.

and said, "What is it, Lord?" -- The language is comparable to Saul's in Acts 22:10, "What will you have me to do?" The word "Lord" could be a respectful "Sir," or a recognition of the visitor's superiority.

And he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. -- Whether this "memorial" is: 1) Cornelius' *remembrance* of God for His goodness to him, and offers Him prayers and alms; or 2) the angel is indicating that God *remembers* Cornelius for his prayers and alms, and is about to remember him with something more.

Some see a play on the word "memorial" as a reference to certain kinds of sacrifices and offering make to God in worship, and that the angel is saying God recognizes his intention of worship.

The word "memorial" was used in the Old Testament of a sacrifice which was burned on the altar together with frankincense and which produced a sweet, aromatic smoke which ascended toward heaven and, as it were, caught the attention of God.

÷Acts 10:5
Acts 10:5

And now send [dispatch] men to Joppa, -- Joppa was about thirty miles north of Caesarea.

We note that never did an angel or the Holy Spirit tell a person what to do be saved. Their mission was to bring the person into contact with a ***man*** who would do that. God has given man the commission to preach the gospel (Matthew 28:19). Paul said, "we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God." (2 Corinthians 4:7).

and bring one Simon who is called Peter; -- Jesus had given the nickname "Rock" ("Peter") to Simon the fisherman, and it stuck (Mark 3:16). In Acts 11:4 we are told that the angel explained to Cornelius that Peter would "speak words to you by which you will be saved." (See Acts 10:22).

It seems that the evangelist Philip may have been a resident right here in Caesarea (Acts 8:40; Acts 21:8-10), where Cornelius himself resided, why not send for him? The reason is given in Matthew 16:19, where Peter had been given the keys to the kingdom. It was his privilege to open the door to the church (the kingdom) first to the Jews in Acts 2:14, and now to the first Gentiles in Acts 10 and 11.

÷Acts 10:6
Acts 10:6

he is lodging with Simon, a tanner, -- Cornelius is informed who to find, and where he could be found. A tanner's business could probably be found easily from the smell of it. But they still had to make some inquiry when they got there (Acts 10:17).

whose house is by the seaside." -- The Lord provides the location of the house to ensure Cornelius or his messengers quickly find it.

÷Acts 10:7
Acts 10:7

When the angel who spoke to him had departed, -- How the angel "departed" we can only assume. He probably just vanished like he had suddened and unexpectedly appeared.

he called two of his servants -- They were "house-hold" servants and apparently believers in God as was Cornelius.

and a devout soldier from among those that waited on him, -- The term "devout" implies that the soldier also was a worshipper of God, (See its use in Acts 10:2). Likely influenced by Cornelius. The soldier was attached to the personal service of Cornelius.

÷Acts 10:8
Acts 10:8

and having related everything to them, -- Cornelius told them about what the angel had spoken to him so they knew what their trip was all about.

he sent them to Joppa. -- It may have been late in the afternoon, but Cornelius is anxious to know more about how to be saved.

It has been remarked that from Joppa, Jonah was sent to preach to the Gentiles at Nineveh, and that from the same place Peter was sent to preach to the Gentiles at Caesarea. - (Adam Clark)

÷Acts 10:9
Acts 10:9

God gives Peter a vision that prepares him for the arrival of the messengers from Cornelius (vv. 7–8). The vision's meaning and OT allusions reinforce the universal cultural scope of the Church's message and mission.

The next day, as they were on their journey and coming near the city, -- To arrive at noon the next day, the men had traveled rapidly (perhaps all night) to cover the 30 miles in this time.

Peter went up on the housetop to pray, -- The Eastern houses had flat roofs which could be accessed from the outside and for safety purposes had a parapet which also provided some privacy somewhat. Peter is there praying.

about the sixth hour. -- The Pharisees had added the sixth hour as another Jewish hour of prayer. This be at noon, a time when Peter would have been hungry and waiting for his midday meal to be prepared (Acts 10:10), an appropriate time for a vision involving food.

÷Acts 10:10
Acts 10:10

And he became hungry and desired something to eat; -- The word for "hunger" (πρόσπεινος) is only used here in all of known Greek literature. Its exact connotation is impossible to know, but the context seems obvious that it means "extreme hunger." Possibly he, like Cornelius (Acts 10:30, NKJV), had been fasting till the time of prayer.

but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance -- The setting of Peter's vision is in view of the Mediterranean Ocean from Simon's roof. The vision was seen much like a man would behold in a dream.

In this verse and in Acts 11:5 and Acts 22:17 , the term "trance" means a semiconscious mental state which allows God to speak to the person. This is a different word from the one used in Acts 10:3 to describe Cornelius' vision.

÷Acts 10:11
Acts 10:11

and saw the heaven opened, -- The perfect tense in this passage literally means "the heavens having been opened continued to be opened."

and something descending, -- The object descending is then described.

like a great sheet, -- This is the same term used for the sails on a ship. How "great" is this? Large enough to containe the animals in Acts 10:12., and Acts 11:6 when he repeats this event.

let down by four corners upon the earth. -- One may picture the great "sheet" with "ropes" attached to the four corners by which it was led down through the opening in the sky above.

The "great sheet" was lowered, perhaps to ground level, until it was right in front of Peter, Acts 11:5.

÷Acts 10:12
Acts 10:12

In it were all kinds of [four-footed] animals -- Luke, the narrator, probably intends to convey that virtually every sort of creature was present. Both clean and unclean animals. To keep the Israelites separate from their idolatrous neighbors, God set specific dietary restrictions regarding the consumption of such animals (cf. Leviticus 11:25-26).

and reptiles [creeping things] -- Various kinds of crawling creatures of the earth. **Snakes, lizards, etc.**

and birds of the air. -- The vision represented the whole animal creation. A mixture of both clean and unclean animals. There were in it living creatures typical of each kind, not a multitude of the same sort of birds and beasts.

÷Acts 10:13
Acts 10:13

And there came a voice to him, -- The voice came down out of the opening in heaven also. (Acts 11:9.)

"Rise, Peter; kill and eat." -- "Rise," Peter had still been in his praying position.

He is then directed to kill without distinction between the clean and unclean, and to eat and satisfy his hunger. Peter is to learn through this divine-communication that Moses' Law concerning the eating-choice among living creatures has now been abrogated by the Lord.

÷Acts 10:14
Acts 10:14

But Peter said, "No, [By no means] Lord; -- "By no means" is a strong Greek phrase used several times in the Septuagint to translate several Hebrew idioms expressing a strong negative.

for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." -- Some of the creatures the Lord tells Peter to eat would have been forbidden for a Jew to eat, and others would have been unclean due to their association with the unclean ones.

Peter was still struggling with his Jewish Law. He was basing his actions on **Leviticus 11**. However, Jesus had dealt specifically with this issue in Mark 7:14 ff, and especially Mark 7:19. where Jesus by his teaching "declared all foods clean." It is interesting to note that Mark is understood to have gathered his material for his Gospel account from the teaching and sermons of the Apostle Peter.

On this note we may mention the one dietary command put upon Christians is expressed in Acts 15:20, where it is stated that since "life" is in the blood, Christians should abstain from eating blood or anything strangled since it still had the "blood" in its system. (Acts 15:29).

÷Acts 10:15
Acts 10:15

And the voice came to him again a second time, -- The voice came from "heaven" as the first voice had come, Acts 11:9.

"What God has cleansed, you must not call common." -- If God has commanded you to do a thing, that thing cannot be considered to be wrong. God "cleansed" all those meats by declaring them to be clean. (1 Timothy 4:4; Titus 1:15).

Peter is left to wonder if the distinction between clean and unclean meats is now abolished, how much more of the Law is abolished? (Ephesians 2:15;. Hebrews 10:9-10; Romans 7:6).

More than just abolishing the OT dietary restrictions, God made unity in the church between Jew and Gentile possible through the comprehensive sacrificial death of Christ (*see note on* Ephesians 2:14).

÷Acts 10:16
Acts 10:16

This happened three times, -- The first thing we think of is that God was very patience with Peter! Just as Peter had denied Jesus three times (Luke 22:34), here the Lord has to reiterate his command some three times.

From the last part of this verse we conclude that the vessel was let down only once, but that the Lord's command to "kill and eat" was repeated three times.

and the thing was taken up at once to heaven. -- This was still a part of the vision Peter is sees while in the trance. When the lesson had been sufficiently impressed upon Peter's mind, the vision is ended with the "great sheet" taken back up quickly to heaven.

÷Acts 10:17
Acts 10:17

Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed -- The verb implies "to be thoroughly at a loss, and not know which way to turn." It is used (Luke 9:7) of Herod's perplexity about Christ, when men said that John the Baptist was risen from the dead.

as to what the vision which he had seen might mean, -- Peter, aroused from his trance, his mind was full of questions as to what was implied by the vision and the statement about God having cleansed all those meats.

behold, the men that were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, -- The location of the house "by the sea" had been described to Cornelius, and now, with confidence their errand will be successful, they find Simon's house.

stood before the gate -- Literally, "**at the porch**," or principal entrance to an Eastern home. It speaks more of a door than a gate.

÷Acts 10:18
Acts 10:18

and called out to ask -- They called to get a response from someone within the house. These messengers, like Cornelius himself, were most probably Gentiles, and so might not feel justified in entering a Jewish house.

whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there. -- They had been instructed to specifically to ask for "Peter". (Both the tanner and Peter had the same name; "Peter" was the nickname by which everyone called him (Mark 3:16).

÷Acts 10:19
Acts 10:19

And while Peter was pondering the vision, -- The conjunction at the beginning of this verse could well be translated "Now". At the very time the men were inquiring at the door, the Holy Spirit was communicating a message to Peter.

the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. -- Peter was turning over the meaning of his vision in his mind, what could it mean, and he is given the explanation by the Spirit (see the next verse.)

Exactly how the Holy Spirit communicated with the apostle is not stated or explained in Scripture. (See 2 Peter 1:21; John 16:13).

God in His providence is working things out with perfect timing. The vision and the movements of the messengers who were dispatched by Cornelius show the same timing as did the call of Philip in relation to the travels of the Ethiopian (Acts 8:26-27).

÷Acts 10:20
Acts 10:20

Rise and go down, -- Peter was still on the housetop in a praying posture.

and accompany them without hesitation; -- Peter was not to "waver" in his decision to accompany the three men. In the parallel passage where Peter is informing the other apostles in Acts 11:12, it is worded “making no distinction,” i.e. between Jew and Gentile.

The Spirit is saying to him, 'Accompanying Gentiles on a journey won't contaminate you, Peter.' There was no option for Peter but to go!

The Spirit was responsible for Cornelius' vision, Cornelius' sending the men, Peter's vision, and now it's Peter time to respond to their request.

for I have sent them." -- While Cornelius had sent them, it was God's communication to Cornelius that was behind it all, so rightfully God could say "I have sent them." The "I" is emphatic in the Greek.

The Spirit has not only sent the apostles to the Gentiles, but He has sent the Gentiles to the apostles.

:Acts 10:21
Acts 10:21

And Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for; -- It seems that even before they have an opportunity to say more, Peter identifies himself and tells the visitors that he knows they are seeking him.

what is the reason for your coming?" -- Peter knows he is to go with them, but he is trying to find out what he is to do after he has accompanied them wherever they want him to go.

A good question for an evangelist to ask the church . "Why Have You Sent For Me?"
And the type of assembly the evangelist hopes to find can be seen in Acts 10:33.

:Acts 10:22
Acts 10:22

And they said, "Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, -- Cornelius is described as "a righteous," "a just man," "upright," and "a good man" (NASB, NKJV, ESV, TEV). For the alms-deeds which he did, and on account of his reverence for the true God.

"God-fearing" was a phrase used to describe those who were not racial Jews but who regularly attended the synagogue.

who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, -- They tell Peter that not only among the people of Cæsarea was the piety of Cornelius known, but among all the Jews.

was directed by a holy angel -- One wonders if an "angel" appearing to a Gentile was a surprise to Peter. But he take it all in stride.

to send for you to come to his house, -- This would be something new for Peter, to go to the house of Gentile.

and to hear what you have to say." -- Cornelius and his household are waiting to hear those "words whereby men can be saved" that the angel promised would be spoken by Peter.

Peter had a message from God for all men; the gospel that offers eternal salvation, and Cornelius was a lost man. Hence, he needed to hear the message Peter had for him.

÷Acts 10:23
Acts 10:23

So he called them in to be his guests. -- The NASV reads "and gave them lodging." This was the first step towards laying aside the scruples to which the Jews were so much attached. Self-respecting Jews of that day did not invite Gentiles into their home, especially soldiers of the hated Roman army.

Ancient Near Eastern hospitality would have required that Peter offer food to his guests and accommodations for the night. It is pretty certain that the accompanying soldier was a Roman and yet Peter invited him in for dinner and fellowship. Notice how in Acts 10:48 Peter will stay in a Roman house for a few days.

The next day he rose and went off with them, -- The men had arrived tired and too late to begin the return trip. So they rested and leave early the next morning for the 30 miles back. The journey will take this day and part of the next before they arrive in Caesarea.

and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him. -- Six Jewish believers (Acts 11:12), identified as "from among the circumcised" in Acts 10:45, accompanied Peter. He knew that this incident would cause problems among some of the Jewish disciples; therefore, he took several witnesses with him (cf. Acts 11:12).

÷Acts 10:24
Acts 10:24

And on the following day they entered Caesare'a. -- The return trip seems to have taken the greater part of two days. Their road lay all the way along the coast, and as Apollonia was situate about halfway between Joppa and Cæsarea, it is most likely that they passed the night there. There were now ten men this traveling group and their travel is slower.

Caesarea was the beautiful city by the sea. It was built by Herod the Great and named in honor of the Roman Caesar. It was the Palestinian quarters for the Roman occupation force. The Romans had made it into a nice harbor.

Cornelius was expecting them -- Cornelius would have known approximately how long it would take his messengers to get to Joppa and to return with Peter. His attitude of preparation shows how convinced he was that God was about to give him an answer to his prayers.

and had called together his kinsmen and close friends. -- He has an audience ready and waiting for the preacher. Included were some fellow Italians ("relatives") and some "close friends" (Italians? or Jews?). They were likely invited to be present because Cornelius knew of their interest in the same object for which he had sent for Peter (Acts 10:33).

What a spirit of anticipation and expectation must have filled this house! All of these would have been discussing the vision, its message, and wondering what would a man sent by God have to say to them!

÷Acts 10:25
Acts 10:25

When Peter entered, -- The first "entering" could mean the city gate or the courtyard of the house where Cornelius was waiting to meet him. The "entering" of Acts 10:27 would be into Cornelius' house where the group was waiting.

Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. -- Cornelius' actions, kneeling to the ground and paying homage, demonstrate his respect for Peter. This is the regular word in the Septuagint and the Gospels for worship. This act of reverence in the Roman officer marks most strongly his sense that Peter was God's messenger.

But, in this context "give respect" may better catch the idea (cf. NJB). An angel had prepared this man's coming; of course Cornelius would honor and respect this messenger (cf. Revelation 19:10; Revelation 22:8-9).

÷Acts 10:26
Acts 10:26

But Peter lifted him up, -- Peter here touches the man, would in itself would be an unthinkable thing for a Jew to do. Peter seems to have reached down and helped Cornelius up to his feet.

saying, "Stand up; I too am a man." -- This describes Peter's refusal to be considered superior to Cornelius (compare Acts 14:15).(cf. Revelation 19:10; Revelation 22:8-9).

÷Acts 10:27
Acts 10:27

And as he talked with him, -- Perhaps here was "small talk" about how the trip was made, etc. and an introductiion of the men accompaning Peter.

he went in and found many persons gathered; -- As Peter enters into the interior of the house he see all the relatives and close friends of Cornelius which have gathered.

÷Acts 10:28
Acts 10:28

and he said to them, -- Peter is likely speaking Greek, which was familiar at Joppa and Caesarea and other seacoast towns in Palestine.

"You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit any one of another nation; -- "Unlawful" is a translation of *athemitos*, which means contrary to custom or law, a violation of an established way of doing things. The strict Jew would not enter a Gentile's house, nor sit on the same couch, nor eat or drink out of a Gentile vessel. This was from Rabbinic tradition and teaching more than from explicit teachings of Moses.

It was notorious among the Romans that the Jews held themselves aloof from other people. Hence the accusation against them, in common with Christians, of being haters of the human race. Tacitus says of them that they hated all people, except their own countrymen.

When Peter says "one of another nation," ("foreigner") he uses a word (*allophulos*) which is carefully and kindly selected to avoid the use of "Gentile." There is no such delicacy of feeling in Acts 10:45 or Acts 11:3.

but God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. -- Peter's presence in Cornelius' home with the many Gentiles gathered there shows that he finally realizes the full implication of his vision (see note on Acts 10:14).

÷Acts 10:29
Acts 10:29

So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I ask then why you sent for me." -- Peter followed in faith the guidance of the Spirit, though he may not have understood at the time. Without the vision Peter most likely would have objected.

A good question for an evangelist to ask the church . "Why Have You Sent For Me?" And the type of assembly the evangelist hopes to find can be see in Acts 10:33.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIAtgC9UNpc

÷Acts 10:30
Acts 10:30

And Cornelius said, "Four days ago, -- Four days, or parts of four different days, have passed between the visit of the angel to Cornelius and Peter's arrival at Caesarea. On the first day the angel appeared to Cornelius, and the messengers were dispatched. On the second, the messengers arrived at Joppa, about noon. On the third, Peter and the rest started for the city of Caesarea. On the fourth, they arrived at the home of Cornelius.

about this hour, -- Cornelius had been praying at 3 p.m. and Peter and has now showed up at the same hour of the day, four days later.

I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house; -- See the comment on Acts 10:3.

and behold, a man stood before me in bright apparel, -- The angel had the appearance of a man, see note at Acts 10:3.

÷Acts 10:31
Acts 10:31

saying, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. -- This is the third time in this chapter that Cornelius' piety has been affirmed (cf. Acts 10:4; and Acts 10:22). Cornelius is not the surprise; what is a pleasant surprise is to see his friends, servants, and family who also trust Christ.

The wording "you prayer has been heard" suggests that the one object of all his prayers has been the same. It must have been a prayer for help to know the truth about God and salvation.

÷Acts 10:32
Acts 10:32

Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon who is called Peter; he is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the seaside.' -- Cornelius relates the message of the angel to Peter. In Acts 11:14 we see also that Peter would speak "words by which you will be saved." We are now waiting and eager to learn what those "words" were!

÷Acts 10:33
Acts 10:33

So I sent to you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. -- Cornelius did as the angel bid him, and he appreciates Peter's response to his appeal.

Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord." -- In this one verse, Acts 10:33 we find the character of an assembly that any preacher could hope to find. See
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIAtgC9UNpc

An Ideal Audience Acts 10:33

Introduction: In almost every audience listening to the gospel there are people with all kinds of attitudes toward the gospel. This is also the way it was in the first century when the apostles preached.
We can see this is true from looking at some of the audiences of the Gospel in the book of Acts.

A. **FELIX** -- Acts 24:24-25 -- Notice his response. Indifferent - a spiritual deficiency on the hearer's part.

B. **STEPHEN'S** AUDIENCE -- Acts 7:51-60 -- Response -- rebellious. (Hebrews 4:12) Stephen laid bare their sins-- sinners not ready to repent did not like it then and people do not like it today. Isaiah 30:9-10.

C. **PENTECOST** -- Acts 2 -- Response -- receptive; (Acts 2:38-47)

I. THE ASSEMBLY In **Acts 10:33** we have the setting for what might be called the Ideal Audience. The story of Cornelius is related to us in the passage. God is willing to bless us as he was Cornelius if we respond the same say. Note the things that characterized this assembly:

1) Promptness – on time, "We are all here." - Matthew 11:28 "come unto me"

2) Visitors – He had invited many friends – John 4:29-30; John 1:41 Andrew > Peter; John 1:45-50 Philip -> Nathaniel.

3) Harmonious audience – Near kinsmen and friends. Acts 10:24. No discord among them. Psalms 133:1 "behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

4) Devotion – "before God" this helped them to be serious. Hebrews 4:12-13
Will be before God at the judgment – Romans 2:16; 2 Corinthians 5:10

5) Attentive audience – "to hear"
(65 Preaching calling down "idiot") Teens

6) Unprejudiced — "to hear all things."
How many want to hear these passages:
Matthew 6:19-24; 1 Timothy 6:9-10;
Mark 16:16; Hebrews 10:25

7) Discriminating – "to hear God" – not man. Deuteronomy 18:15; Mark 9:7 "hear him"

8) Responsive – They yielded obedience – Acts 10:43-48.

II. THE MESSAGE

A) The sweet story of God and His love – Acts 10:38.
1) Christ's the anointed of God. v. 38 "Who went about doing good"
2) Christ's demonstration of the truth that He is God's Son - "healing" v. 38
3) His death, Acts 10:39;
4) His resurrection Acts 10:40;
5) The Judgment v. Acts 10:42

(1. His Virtuous life - v.38
(2. His Vicarious death - v.39
(3. His Victorious resurrection - v.40
a) There was the personal testimony of the saints - v.39, 40
b) There was the prophetic testimony of the scriptures - v.43. There was the Powerful testimony of the Spirit - v.44

B) He was to tell him how to be saved– Acts 11:14

C) The words of the great commission – Acts 10:42-43; Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:20

III. THE RESULTS
a) Prompt obedience – Acts 10:43-48
b) Great bless.. Remission of sins, Acts 10:43.

Conclusion:
1. Both the audience and the message here discussed are examples for us.
2. God will settled with us according to our obedience – Hebrews 5:8-9

:Acts 10:34
Acts 10:34

And Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, -- "Perceive" ("understand" ESV; "now realize" NIV) is a present tense verb and might be translated, "I am beginning to understand." If God has heard Cornelius' prayer, sent an angel to him and an object lesson to Peter, then it must be that God is no respecter of persons.

Peter realizes that God does not exclude people from sharing in the grace of Christ (compare Isaiah 2:1-5). Salvation in Jesus is not extended on basis of ethnicity or culture but is an offer to all. (Titus 2:11; Matthew 7:21; Hebrews 5:9).

÷Acts 10:35
Acts 10:35

but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. -- Peter is now fully convinced, from what he has heard of God's angel appearing to Cornelius and from the connection of that vision with his own, that God is making Himself known to all the workers of righteousness whether they be Jews or Gentiles.

The major truth is that Gentiles can obey the Gospel and become Christians without first becoming proselyte Jews. This sets the theological stage for the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15.

WORKS - James 2:24, James 2:26, John 12:42, Galatians 5:6, Acts 10:34-35, Matthew 7:21, Hebrews 5:9.
Kinds of Works
1. Works of the flesh- Galatians 5:19-21
2. Our own works- Acts 7:41, 2 Timothy 1:9
3. Works of the law of Moses Galatians 2:16
4. Works of obedience- Acts 10:34-35, Luke 6:46, John 6:29.

÷Acts 10:36
Acts 10:36

You know -- Verses 35, 36, and 38 all begin with an accusative case (i.e., an object of a verb), and the only verb is "you know" that is found in Acts 10:37. (See the NASB)
1) Peter may be stating that Cornelius already "knows" what was taught about the birth of Christ and his ministry to the nation of Israel.

the word which he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace by Jesus Christ -- 2) Or, since Luke may here be giving us only an outline of Peter's presentation, we find that Peter began with the birth of Jesus and the "**word**" in this verse is the message of the Messiah proclaimed by angels (Luke 2:14) as a message of glad tidings, and of "peace" on earth, through the birth of a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.

This was first preached unto Israel as God's chosen people, but now God is the giver of remission of sins to every one that believes on Him (see Acts 10:43).

(he is Lord of all), -- Peter emphasizes certain details of the gospel message that specifically relate to God's plans for Gentile people. Foremost is the theology that Jesus' lordship extends over "all." He is not a cultural or national king, but the true king for everyone in the world.

"Peace" is available to all, for Christ is the Savior of all.

÷Acts 10:37
Acts 10:37

you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed. -- Peter assumes those present are familiar with Jesus' earthly ministry, perhaps because the broad outlines of the events were widely known (compare Acts 2:22; Acts 8:40; Acts 26:26), or because Cornelius and his family believed in Yahweh and would keep informed of Jewish religious developments (see Acts 10:2 and note).

the baptism which John proclaimed. -- See Luke 3:21-23. Cornelius must have been stationed in Caesarea for some time if Peter is able to say, "You know about John the Baptist's preparatory ministry, and about the beginning of Jesus' ministry in Galilee and Judea." It was more than twelve years previous that these things had happened.

÷Acts 10:38
Acts 10:38

Peter continues some his summary of Jesus' identity, ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection. Some these things Cornelius may know or not know about Jesus of Nazareth.

how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; -- Jesus had lived as a man in Nazareth, but yet had been God's Anointed, the Messiah, and shown to be so by the mighty works which He did. He had been given the Spirit without measure (John 3:34-35).

The "power" God gave to Jesus at that time was the power to heal the sick, raise the dead, etc

how he went about doing good -- This is a summary of Jesus' ministry, He looked for ways to be helpful to people.

and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, -- This is the whole scope of what did and preached; he was able do good and help those who were demon oppressed.

for God was with him. -- As Nicodemus confessed, "No man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him" (John 3:2).

÷Acts 10:39
Acts 10:39

And we are witnesses to all that he did both in the country of the Jews -- Peter could speak of himself and the apostles as "witnesses;" (This would be an advantage of Peter over the preaching of the evangelist Philip, Acts 8:40). He had been with Jesus from the beginning of His ministerial life (Luke 24:48).

and in Jerusalem. -- This note reminds us of what has been called the climactic week of Jesus' earthly ministry.

They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; -- The word "tree" (or "Cross") is from the word *xulon*, or "tree." The word indicates that the cross was made out of rough logs.

The Greek text here seems to allude to Deuteronomy 21:22-23, which says that anyone who is executed by hanging on a tree is cursed by God. The implication is that, by taking on Himself God's curse on the cross, Jesus satisfied the penalty of the law on behalf of all who will put their faith in Him (see Galatians 3:13-14; compare Isaiah 53:5; Zechariah 12:10).

÷Acts 10:40
Acts 10:40

but God raised him on the third day -- As he did in the sermon recorded in Acts 3:13 ff, Peter again contrasts what the people did to Jesus with what God did for Him. The people put Him to death on a cross. God raised Him from the dead.

and made him manifest; -- After His resurrection it was made clear to all those who saw Jesus, by many proofs, that it was the same body which had been wounded on the cross, that was alive again. (Acts 1:3).

÷Acts 10:41
Acts 10:41

not to all the people -- Jesus did not appear to all the Jewish people who had seen Him during His earthly ministry.

but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, -- The twelve apostles were chosen to be witnesses of Christ's ministry and resurrection. The chosen witnesses were not deceived about the resurrection.

who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. -- They ate and drank with the risen Lord Jesus (See Luke 24:42-43. And in the narrative John 21:12-15 it is to be inferred, especially from the last verse, that Jesus Himself partook of the food which He gave to the rest), by eating and drinking with His disciples, furnished the clearest possible proof that He was truly risen.

÷Acts 10:42
Acts 10:42

And he commanded us to preach to the people, -- The apostles were commissioned to take the gospel message to the world (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:2).

and to testify that he is the one ordained by God to be judge of the living and the dead. -- Christ's words to the Jews (John 5:22-27), "The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son," "And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man."

The phrase "living and dead" refers to judgment at the last day, the Second Coming. Some believers will be alive (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Jesus is the one to whom all will give account on the day of judgment (see Acts 17:31; 2 Timothy 4:1; 1 Peter 4:5; Revelation 20).

÷Acts 10:43
Acts 10:43

To him all the prophets bear witness -- Peter argues that his brief synopsis of Christ's ministry and its implications are based on the OT (compare Psalms 22:1-31; Isaiah 52:13-15; Isaiah 53:1-12; Zechariah 11:4-14).

that every one who believes in him -- So that under the Law the redemption of the Gentiles was seen afar off. The way in which Peter uses the Jewish Scriptures to enforce his arguments make us believe that Cornelius and his household were familiar with those writings. (Isaiah 49:6; Joel 2:32).

receives forgiveness of sins -- These words of Peter's are the words which Cornelius and his friends have been waiting anxiously to hear. Not by submitting themselves to the requirements of the Law of Moses, not by circumcision and all that implied, but by faith in Christ is the God-ordained way to remission of sins. (Colossians 1:14; Ephesians 1:7; *see notes on* 2 Corinthians 5:19-21.)

(Also see Acts 2:38 for "forgiveness of sins.")

through his name." -- McGarvey says, "It should be observed, further, that the statement in question is not absolutely that "every one who believes in him shall receive remission of sins;" but that he shall receive it "*through his name.*" ... But we are *immersed into* his name with that of the Father and the Holy Spirit; hence it is at the time of this immersion, that the believer receives remission of sins *through* his name."

÷Acts 10:44
Acts 10:44

While Peter was still saying this, -- Peter had got to the point about "forgiveness of sins" being possible "through his name" to all who "believe in Him" but he had not finished his sermon when the Spirit fell on the hearers.

Yet spake -- was speaking. John 14:17; Acts 11:4; Acts 11:15; Acts 15:7; Acts 11:14

the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. -- Here the Holy Spirits comes upon Gentiles like it did the Jewish apostles in Acts 2:1-4. That event on Pentecost in Acts 2:1-4 is referred to as the ***beginning*** Acts 11:15. That outpouring of the Holy Spirit was upon Jews and nothing like that had occurred again until Acts 10:44-45 when it was upon Gentiles. When describing this event later to the rest of the apostles, to find a likeness to what had happened at Cornelius' house, Peter had to refer back to the day of Pentecost that followed Jesus' death and resurrection.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit was a miraculous supernatural manifestation. Christ was the baptizer John 1:33;

÷Acts 10:45
Acts 10:45

And the believers from among the circumcised who came with Peter were amazed, -- The "circumcised" are the six Jewish brothers who came with Peter from Joppa. They are "amazed" ("astonished") at the unfolding event.

because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. -- The same supernatural manifestation of the Spirit (cf. Acts 10:46) that occurred at Pentecost, occurres again involving Romans! This special sign was *not* for Cornelius, but for his friends, and for the benefit of the circumcised believers who would hear of this account later (cf. Acts 10:47). It showed in a powerful, undisputable fashion that God had accepted Gentiles (cf. Acts 11:17), even Romans!

:Acts 10:46
Acts 10:46

For they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. -- These Gentiles were praising and magnifying God in tongues. They were probably speaking Hebrew; otherwise how would the Jews present know *what* they where saying? 1 Corinthians 14:19; 1 Corinthians 14:16;

Speak with tongues -- Speaking in a tongue not one's own is not proof of salvation - Numbers 22:28. The purpose was to show Peter and the Jews that Gentiles were accepted into God's plan Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11;

Then Peter declared, -- Peter's sermon had been interrupted, but now he continues with the same command he gave on Pentecost to those asking what they needed to do. (Acts 2:37-38).

:Acts 10:47
Acts 10:47

"Can any one forbid water for baptizing these people -- This was a rhetorical question posed to gain the consensus of the Jewish believers who accompanied Peter from Joppa. In effect, Peter asks, 'Is it not clear that the Gentiles are entitled to the privilege of being immersed into Christ for the remission of sins, and thus becoming a part of the Church?'

Baptism into Christ for the believing Gentiles could not be denied. On the same basis as Jewish believers were baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:26-27) these Gentiles should be baptized as well.

The word "baptize" means to immerse. *Baptizdo* is the Greek word that means immerse; *hrantidzo* is the Greek word that means to sprinkle and so when a writer means sprinkle he uses *hrantidzo* and when he means an immersion he uses *baptidzo*. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 10:47; Matthew 28:18-20.

who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" -- God has shown that there is no distinction to be made between Jew and Gentile. (Acts 15:8). The command given at Pentecost for Jews is the same now given to the Gentiles. (Acts 2:38).

:Acts 10:48
Acts 10:48

And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. -- Peter, in essence, repeats the command he gave the Jews at Pentecost. This was in compliance with the Lord's direction which He gave the apostles before his ascension back into heaven (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).

in the name -- ἐν *en* "by the authority of"; "by the command of" of Jesus. The consequence was that the Lord then added those being saved to His church. (see the note at Acts 2:47).

Then they asked him to remain for some days. -- It is probable that Peter consented to stay (see Acts 11:3), and that he acted in accordance to the teaching of the vision in eating and fellowship with them.

We know that afterwards (Galatians 2:11-13) he wavered in his determination, and was rebuked by Paul for so doing; but even the account of that rebuke shows us that Peter had laid aside his Jewish prejudices in a great degree, and had only acted, in the way which was blamable, through the influence of some still strict Jews who had come from Jerusalem to Antioch.

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Commanded them -- See **James 2:24** note **"Being Saved"** and the role of baptism in one's salvation. Underscore the word "commanded." Peter, the inspired apostle, *commanded* baptism. In Acts 2:38 "repentance and baptism" is also imperative in the Greek.

:Acts 11:1
Acts 11:1

11:1–18 *While much of this narrative mirrors Acts 10, it focuses on God's intervention on behalf of the Gentiles showing that Peter has not just accepted the Gentiles as Christians but has become their advocate.*

Now the apostles and the brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. -- This was a major event in Christianity, Gentiles obeying the gospel without first being proselyted into the Jewish religion.

"Gentiles also" as well as the Samaritans had received the word (Acts 8:5).

In Acts 8:1 we learn that the apostles had stayed in Jerusalem even after the church was scattered by the persecution that arose at the time of Stephen's death. Peter himself had fled after he had been arrested, following the apostle James' execution. An angel had aided Peter's escape from prison and he left Jerusalem and had been preaching along the Mediterranean coastal area. (Acts 12:1-2; Acts 12:17; Acts 9:32; Acts 9:35; Acts 9:43).

received the word of God -- The phrase is used in Acts to indicate acceptance and obedience to the Gospel, Acts 2:41; Acts 8:14; Acts 11:1; and Acts 17:11.

EXAMPLES OF CONVERSION:

1. Pentecost- Acts 2:22 & Acts 2:36-47
2. Samaria- Acts 8:4-13

3. Ethiopian eunuch- Acts 8:26-39
4. Paul (Saul)- Acts 9:1-20 & Acts 22:6-16
5. Cornelius– Acts 10:1-48 & Acts 11:1-18
6. Lydia- Acts 16:13-15
7. Philippian jailer- Acts 16:23-34
8. Corinthians- Acts 18:8

÷Acts 11:2
Acts 11:2

So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, -- The news had reached them before Peter returns to Jerusalem. Whether he was summoned to Jerusalem by the other apostles or if he came on his own accord after the conclusion of this stay in Caesarea, we don't know. We learn from Acts 11:12 that the six brethren from Joppa who had accompanied him to Cornelius's house now came with Peter to Jerusalem.

the circumcision party criticized him, -- This refers to those in the Christian community who wanted to require Gentiles to first become Jews, including requiring the men to be circumcised, in order to be considered true Christians (compare Galatians 2:3 and note).

Some commentators have suggested that these opponents of Peter are the ones who eventually develop into the extreme *Judaizing party* which will so bitterly oppose Paul's ministry among the Gentiles, as recorded in Acts 15, Galatians 2, and elsewhere. Even if it is not the very same people involved, these same principles will motivate the Judaizers' opposition to the gospel.

÷Acts 11:3
Acts 11:3

saying, "Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?" -- The Jewish believers were outraged over Peter eating and lodging with Gentiles. The complaint him eating with the Gentiles must be understood to be a complaint about Peter's eating "unclean" food." It was a blatant breach of Jewish custom.

The expression shows the strength of feeling against what Peter had done. The men with whom he had mixed are not called Gentiles, but the uncircumcised, the word of greatest reproach in the mouth of a Jew.

÷Acts 11:4
Acts 11:4

11:4–18 *Peter recounts his experience at Simon's and Cornelius' houses (Acts 10) for the Jewish leaders at Jerusalem. This repetition before the apostles and the church leaders at Jerusalem is Luke's way of showing how important this issue (and world evangelization).*

But Peter began and explained to them in order: -- Peter is explaining to those in Jerusalem how he himself used to have prejudices based on human tradition just like they now have, and how these prejudices were overcome. He explains about the vision he received from the Lord and what

God did for Cornelius. Just as Peter was led step by step into his new understanding, so now he is attempting to lead his objectors to the same understanding.

The word, "order," *kathexēs* is used in the NT only by Luke (cf. Luke 1:3; Luke 8:1; Acts 3:24; Acts 11:4; Acts 18:23). It has the connotation of explaining something in a logical, sequential order, or chronological order.

÷Acts 11:5
Acts 11:5

For details on Acts 11:5-15, see the notes at Acts 10:9-48.

"I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, something descending, like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came down to me. -- See notes on Acts 10:9-12 -ff.

÷Acts 11:6
Acts 11:6

Looking at it closely I observed animals and beasts of prey and reptiles and birds of the air. -- See notes on Acts 10:9-12 -ff.

÷Acts 11:7
Acts 11:7

And I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' -- See notes on Acts 10:12-14 -ff.
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÷Acts 11:8
Acts 11:8

But I said, 'No, Lord; for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' -- See notes on Acts 10:12-15 -ff.

÷Acts 11:9
Acts 11:9

But the voice answered a second time from heaven, 'What God has cleansed you must not call common.' -- See notes on Acts 10:13-16 -ff.

÷Acts 11:10
Acts 11:10

This happened three times, and all was drawn up again into heaven. -- See notes on Acts 10:13-16 -ff. "Drawn back up" expresses a rapid upward movement.

÷Acts 11:11
Acts 11:11

At that very moment three men arrived at the house in which we were, sent to me from Caesare'a. -- See notes on Acts 10:16-20 -ff.

÷Acts 11:12
Acts 11:12

And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction. -- Peter was instructed to make "no distinction" between Jew and Gentile. Guided by the Holy Spirit, Peter raised no such opposition as the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem were now raising.

In the account in Acts 10:20 the angel told Peter to go with the men who were looking for hime, "for I have sent them**."**

These six brethren also accompanied me, -- Here we learn that the six who accompanied Peter from Joppa to Caesarea have also accompanied him to Jerusalem. Perhaps we have now learned the purpose for which Peter had these brethren accompany him to Caesarea. They were to be witnesses with him of what God had done.

and we entered the man's house. -- Peter obeyed the instructions he was given, so he and the six brethren broke traditional rules.

÷Acts 11:13
Acts 11:13

And he told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house -- The language used by Peter implies that the circumstances of the conversion of Cornelius were well known in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 11:1). Peter says "the angel" as though they were already acquainted with the appearance of the angel to Cornelius.

a**nd saying, 'Send to Joppa and bring Simon called Peter; --** (cf. Acts 10:5-6; Acts 10:17-18; Acts 10:22.)

÷Acts 11:14
Acts 11:14

he will declare to you a message -- The "message" here would be the "words" that were commanded of God that Cornelius needed to hear. A "message" that when believed and responded to properly in repentance and obedience could save.

by which you will be saved, you and all your household.' -- It appears that Cornelius communicated this part of the angel's message to Peter just before he began speaking to those gathered at his house (Acts 10:33).

"Household" here would include Cornelius' family and servants, and also the guests gather at his home in this context. It would be those who could comprehend the gospel and believe it.

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SINCERITY NOT ENOUGH

Paul was- Acts 23:1 & Acts 26:9-11, 1 Timothy 1:12-16, Acts 7:58-60 & Acts 8:1.
Cornelius was--- Acts 10:1-2 & Acts 11:13-14.
See also Proverbs 14:12, Luke 16:15, Isaiah 55:8-9.

÷Acts 11:15

Acts 11:15

As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them -- Holy Spirit baptism was uncommon. The event Peter refers back to as a similar likeness to what happened at Cornelius' house was ten years old back to that day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2. Peter had to go all the way to *"the beginning"* to find a likeness to it.

just as on us at the beginning. -- The event on Pentecost in Acts 2:1-4 is referred to as the ***beginning.*** That outpouring of the Holy Spirit was upon Jews, the twelve apostles. And nothing like it occurred again until Acts 10:44-45 when it was upon Gentiles. To find a likeness to what had happened at Cornelius' house, Peter had to refer back to the day of Pentecost that followed Jesus' death and resurrection.

That day, Pentecost of Acts 2, was the ***beginning*** of the preaching of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, the ***Gospel***. It was the beginning of the church, Acts 2:47. It was the beginning of the New Covenant age. Christ had returned to heaven as High Priest to offer His own blood as the price for man's redemption. Hebrews 9:24.

God used this experience with Cornelius to show His acceptance of other racial, geographical, and cultural groups (cf. Acts 11:17). The experience was not for Cornelius, but for (1) Peter; (2) the accompanying Jewish believers; and (3) the church in Jerusalem.

÷Acts 11:16

Acts 11:16

And I remembered the word of the Lord, -- Peter remembers what Jesus had said just before his ascension back to heaven, Acts 1:5.

This shows the pattern of the early Apostles' approach to theology: quote Jesus, use Jesus' example, or quote the OT (cf. Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:5). Peter is establishing that the Lord Himself foresaw this development (i.e. sign).

how he said, 'John baptized with water, -- John had baptized people, immersed them, in water in his ministry Matthew 3:6; Mark 1:5; Luke 3:16; Luke 7:29; As had Jesus' disciples also, John 3:26; John 4:1-2.

John used a play on the word "baptize"; first *literally*, as he immersed his disciples in water, then *metaphorically*, as Jesus would "*overwhelm, submerge, immerse*" his disciples (apostles) with the Holy Spirit. (Jesus also used the word *metaphorically* in Mark 10:38-39 so speak of a "baptism" of suffering.)

but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' -- John had foretold that one coming would baptized (over-whelm; immerse) his disciples with the Holy Spirit, Matthew 3:11; John 1:33.

Here we learn for certain that what happened at Cornelius' house was a "baptism with the Holy Spirit" in fulfillment of the words of prophecy.

Baptism with the Holy Spirit was a baptism performed by the Lord Himself, and not by his delegates (Matthew 3:11; John 1:33). "Baptism" is a picture of the method, *an overwhelming, an immersion, a submerging* figuratively in something; the something on this occasion was the Holy Spirit.

÷Acts 11:17
Acts 11:17

If then God gave the same [like] gift to them -- Cornelius was given the "same gift" - tongues - as the Apostles were given in Acts 2:1-4. The second similarity was in the manner of how it was sent. It came directly from God without human intervention.

as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, -- The words "to them" and "to us" made their cases parallel (as in Acts 10:15). For in the case of Peter and the Apostles, their faith was existing before they received the gift of the Spirit, so in Cornelius and in his companions there existed a faith, or there could have been no sincere prayer offered by them.

But the real point is that in each case the Spirit was bestowed, not as a result of circumcision or uncircumcision, but in cases where there was belief!

who was I -- Peter felt that he didn't have the right to oppose the manifest will of the Lord. God was showing Peter that Gentiles should be welcomed into the fellowship of believers.

Peter no longer hesitated to go with the men, or to stay with them, even if they were Gentiles! He did not hesitate to eat and associate with them.

that I could withstand God?" -- Peter's language and reasoning here seem to echo Gamaliel's argument to the Sanhedrin that if God is indeed behind the Church's message and mission, then no one will be able to stop it (Acts 5:38-39).

÷Acts 11:18
Acts 11:18

When they heard this they were silenced [held their peace]. -- The "they" would be the apostles and Judean brethren spoken of in Acts 11:1-2. Peter is saying that to take issue with what was done would be to oppose or resist God. His arguments prompted those in Jerusalem to withdraw their opposition to what had been done.

There were some Jews, apparently not present to hear Peter's first-person testimony, who maintained their misguided zeal for the Law. Some, as St Paul says (Galatians 6:13), who from vain-glory, maintained the necessity for Gentiles to observance the Law of Moses, and so there arose dissension in this matter from a very early time. (The issue is revisited in Acts 15. in what is popularly called "The Jerusalem Council")

And they glorified God, saying, -- The difference of tenses in the two Greek verbs implies that they first quieted down (i.e., ceased taking issue with Peter), and then they began a continuous utterance of praise.

"Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life." -- The reception of Gentiles into the Church upon an equal footing with the Jews was a settled issue. God had made it clear. But it was an issue that the Apostle Paul had to continually wrestle with everywhere he went.

This was one of the most shocking admissions in Jewish history, but an event that the OT had prophesied (Isaiah 42:1, Isaiah 42:6; Isaiah 49:6).

÷Acts 11:19
Acts 11:19

Acts 11:19-30 - *The early church's mission continues to the Gentiles, as demonstrated in Antioch and the reintroducton of Saul to the Acts narrative.*

Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen -- See Acts 8:4. These verses seem to be a historical flashback and a theological summary. We have several early examples of these persecutions in Acts (cf. Acts 5:17-18 ff; Acts 6:8-15; Acts 8:1-3; Acts 9:1-2).

traveled as far as Phoeni'cia -- Phoenicia is modem-day Lebanon, north of Israel along the Mediterranean coast, beyond Caesarea (Acts 8:40) and to areas besides Damascus (Acts 9:1-2).

and Cyprus -- A Mediterranean island identified as the native home of Barnabas (Acts 4:36) and the first place where he and Saul/Paul visited on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:4-6).

and Antioch, -- "Antioch," was among the five largest and most important cities of the Roman Empire. It was the capital of Syria and it had a large Jewish population. It was well known for its university life and its sexual immorality. It was also famous worldwide for its chariot racing. It will become a major center of Christianity!

speaking the word to none except Jews. -- Up until the time Peter visited Cornelius and baptized that Gentile household, the scope of the church's mission was limited culturally to Jews and proselytes.

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Acts 11:19-30; Acts 13:1-3

The Great Church at Antioch

1. The church at Antioch was a UNITED church, though composed of a mixture of
   a. Jews, Acts 11:19, and
   b. Grecians, Acts 11:20, cf. Acts 13:1.

2. The Great Church at Antioch was known for PREACHING CHRIST. Acts 11:20

3. Its MEMBERS were EXHORTED (encouraged), Acts 11:23
   a. They enjoyed God's grace
   b. The cleaved to the Lord

4. The LOST were CONVERTED, Acts 11.24
    a. Much people were taught Acts 11.26
    b. The disciples were called "Christians"

5. It was a BENEVOLENT church, Acts 11:28-29
    a. They were liberal givers
    b. They were concerned
    c. The were organized and cooperated, Acts 11.30

6. It was a MISSION MINDED church, Acts 13.1-3

[For full outline see the sermon "***The Great Church At Antioch"*** in the e-Sword topic file **"Sermons_Gann.topx"** for additional comments on the Acts 11:19-30; and Acts 13:1-3.]

÷Acts 11:20
Acts 11:20

But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyre'ne, who on coming to Antioch -- Could Nicolas (Acts 6:5) have been one of those who went to "Antioch"? Else why is he the only one connected with a location and the fact that he was a proselyte. This would facilitate a contact with Gentiles who were proselytes to the faith in Antioch.

spoke to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. -- Contrasted with Acts 11:19 when they were speaking the word to "Jews only," it appears they are now speaking to "Greeks," that is, Gentiles. Apparently these men of Cyprus and Cyrene had heard of the conversion of Cornelius. The time frame is about A.D. 41-42.

We notice that they are "p**reaching the Lord Jesus" a**nd all that this involves. (See note where Philip preached to the Ethiopian Acts 8:35-36.)

÷Acts 11:21
Acts 11:21

And the hand of the Lord was with them, -- This expression is a common one in the OT to express the direct interposition of God in the affairs of the world. Cp. Exodus 14:31; Exodus 8:19.

In the disciples' prayer in Acts 4:30, they prayed that God would "stretch out his hand to heal" and provide signs and wonders through the name of Jesus. They wanted to be the "hands" of the Lord. (cf. Acts 13:11).

and a great number that believed turned to the Lord. -- The "turning to the Lord" is a phrase that identifies the whole process of "hearing the Gospel," "faith," "repentance," and "baptism." (see notes at Acts 3:19; Acts 2:38)

The conversion of Cornelius opened the doors to sharing the message with Gentiles and there is a great influx of believers. The church in Antioch, comprised of converts from both Jewish and Greek background, becomes the springboard for evangelistic efforts to the Gentile world at large.

÷Acts 11:22
Acts 11:22

News of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, -- When the apostles in Jerusalem heard of the conversions in Samaria at the preaching of Philip, they had sent Peter and John, Acts 8:6; Acts 8:14-15. Now, hearing of the many new converts at Antioch they send Barnabas to them.

and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. -- We read of Barnabas in Acts 4:36-37, and in Acts 9:26-28 where he introduced Saul to other disciples in Jerusalem. Barnabas being a native of Cyprus would most likely be well known to the Cyprians who were preaching at Antioch, and so he was a most fit person to be selected for this errand. The time frame is about A.D. 42.

Barnabas's name indicates he was an "encourager" and could be a great blessing to the church at Antioch. We should probably view this delegation of Barnabas to Antioch as an effort by the Jerusalem church to express their "fellowship" with the evangelistic work at Antioch.

Any idea that the Jerusalem church was trying (like an ecclesiastical hierarchy) to control all the other churches must be rejected. Barnabas was not sent to Antioch with orders to report back to the so-called "headquarters."

÷Acts 11:23
Acts 11:23

When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad; -- What did Barnabas see? He saw people's lives changed because of the power of the gospel. Barnabas is happy to see that God's blessings (grace) has been upon the preaching at Antioch as evidenced by the many converts.

and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose; -- Barnabas lived up to his name and "exhorted" them to "cleave" to the Lord, to "hold fast" to their faith. Antioch was a place for many temptations to believers young in the faith. All these new Gentile converts needed teaching and encouragement.

÷Acts 11:24
Acts 11:24

for he was a good man, -- Words of praise like this are comparatively rare in the book of Acts, Luke and others must have though highly of this man. This praise will help us to keep from forming a wrong opinion of Barnabas when we read in Acts 15:39 of the sad contention between Paul and Barnabas.

full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. -- The same character is said of Stephen Acts 6:5. A man of this character could exert much influence in Antioch. "Full of the Holy Spirit" here would probably mean that his life was full of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23 ff), though it could also mean he had the power to work miracles and speak by inspiration, (a prophet, cf. Acts 13:1).

"Full of faith" seems to mean that he was a man who had a good grasp of the teaching of Christ, a man of settled convictions.

And a large company was added to the Lord. -- Because of Barnabas work "great multitudes" were added to the church. Luke's note about the growth of the congregation means there was a large increase in numbers even in addition to what was already enumerated in Acts 11:21.

÷Acts 11:25
Acts 11:25

About A.D. 43

So Barnabas went to Tarsus-- "Tarsus" was the birthplace of Paul and a key city in the Roman province of Cilicia. It served as both a commercial and educational center. Its university ranked with those of Athens and Alexandria as the finest in the Roman world.

to look -- This verb found in other papyr implies that Saul was not easy to find. Luke also uses this word in Luke 2:44-45, when Joseph and Mary were looking ("seeking") for Jesus.

for Saul; -- Several years had elapsed since Saul fled Jerusalem (Acts 9:30). Undoubtedly Barnabas remember what had been said of Saul by the Lord at the time of his conversion, "*he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles*" (Acts 9:15).

Many think that he had been disinherited due to his new allegiance to Christianity (Philippians 3:8). These silent years are apparently referred to in Galatians 1:21. The exact time frame is uncertain, but it was approximately ten years.

÷Acts 11:26
Acts 11:26

and when he had found him, -- This compliments the idea of the verb "look" in the previous verse that Saul was not easy to find and Barnabas had to search him out.

he brought him to Antioch. -- (See the note at Acts 11:19 for information about Antioch.) At Antioch Saul/Paul found a quiet growing Church with which he could apply his zeal and earnestness.

For a whole year -- This long period that Paul successfully spent preaching to Gentiles at Antioch will account for his constant return to this city after each missionary journey. They were the ones who initially sponsored him to carry the gospel of Christ to other places (Acts 13:1-4).

they met with the church, and taught a large company of people; -- Barnabas and Saul worked together in teaching a "large company" in the out-reach program of the church

and in Antioch the disciples -- Previously we have seen that the terms uses to refer to the followers of Christ were "disciples" "followers," "believers," "brethren," "saints," "Galileans," and "Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5); but one of the most common was simply ***"the way***" especially by Luke in Acts. (Acts 9:2; Acts 19:9; Acts 19:23; Acts 22:4; Acts 24:14; Acts 24:22).

were for the first time called -- The verb "c**alled"** is Χριστιανο ς **,** *chre ¯matizo ¯*, G5537 and is aorist, infinitive, active, meaning "divinely called;" "divinely warned;" "divinely revealed" in all the places where it occurs in the NT, (See IGNT+, Matthew 2:12; Matthew 2:22; Luke 2:26; Acts 10:22; Acts 11:26; Romans 7:3; Hebrews 8:5; Hebrews 11:7; Hebrews 12:25)

WordStudy's first definition of the verb as used in the NT is: "**(I)** Spoken in respect to a divine response, oracle, or declaration, to give response, speak as an oracle, warn from God," - WordStudy

> "The Greek verb here is always used of God calling, etc. Hence the evidence that this new name, was given by prophets at Antioch, or a designation from the Gentiles in the city there, was a God given name, the "new name" for the people of His fold."

This new name taken together with Isaiah 62:2 that God would give his people a "new name;" *"The nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory, and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give*," (Isaiah 62:2; see also Isaiah 62:12) leads us to conclude that the name "Christian" came from God's plan.

In the context, the very next verse says "*Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch.*" It would seem most logical to see these prophets looking at the Greek-Jewish mixture of believers, were the ones to divinely to apply the name "Christian" to these believers. It is not strange that this "new name" came first into use here in this metropolitan center of Antioch, for this mixed group of believers.

Christians. -- When these new Gentile converts were added (Acts 2:47) to the church of Antioch, none of the former distinctive appellations would adequately describe this whole body. They were no longer all Nazarenes or Galileans or Greek-Jews, and to the people of Antioch they probably seemed a strange mixture.

The community of disciples began to be known as a distinct movement from Judaism that was loyal to Jesus as Messiah (or Christ) and Lord (compare Acts 2:36 and note; Acts 10:36).

The word "Christian" has as its root the Greek word "*Christos*" which is for the Hebrew word for the "*Messiah.*" But it is now given the Latin adjective ending "*ian*".

Most commentaries take the position that it was given to the followers of Christ by the Gentiles here in Antioch to distinguish them from the Jews since they were Greeks and not Grecian Jews. The Jews would not call them "Christians" because of their own use of *Christos* for the Messiah. The Jews termed them Galileans or Nazarenes, but that no longer sufficed.

"The best and most likely understanding of this phrase is the suggestion made above, that the name was given by divine inspiration through Barnabas and Paul." - Reese

Many commentators take the position it was a name used is mockery, or ridicule by the citizens of Antioch, but there is not the slightest evidence for this, only supposition. It could be stretched that any name they used was approve by God and fit His designation of the "new name" of Isaiah 62:2.

Agrippa used the name in Acts 26:28, but there is no evidence he used it in contempt as some would try to imply, but again without any evidence. Peter used the name in 1 Peter 4:16 in speaking of the persecution from the Roman government.

See TopicNotes **"Sermons_Gann.topx"**
Biblical Characteristics of a Christian

÷Acts 11:27
Acts 11:27

Now in these days -- This is while the church at Antioch was being increased with a great multitude of Gentile converts, during the year's residence there of Barnabas and Saul.

prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. -- Prophets were preachers/teachers who were inspired spokesmen for God. (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:32; Ephesians 2:20; *see* Acts 13:1*;* Acts 21:9; Ephesians 4:11). There were temporary gifts given to the first century church, Ephesians 4:8-13, during its infancy.

Sometimes these men are seen occupied in preaching and explaining the Word of God, and sometimes they have the power of foretelling future events, as Agabus did here. See Acts 13:1, Acts 15:32; Acts 19:6; Acts 21:9-10; Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:10, 1 Corinthians 12:28-29, 1 Corinthians 13:2; 1 Corinthians 13:8, 1 Corinthians 14:6; 1 Corinthians 14:29-37.

÷Acts 11:28
Acts 11:28

And one of them named Ag'abus stood up -- Agabus is here spoken of as one of the prophets from Jerusalem. We see him again in Acts 21:10-11 in the city of Caesarea when Paul stayed at the home of Philip the evangelist. He is the one who foretells that Paul would be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles when he gets to Jerusalem at the close of the third missionary journey.

and foretold by the Spirit -- That is, he announced this coming famine by inspiration.

that there would be a great famine -- There were frequent famines as seen in Tacitus [*Annals* XI.43] and Josephus, [*Antiquities* 3.320; 20.101] and other Roman historians. The date of this particular famine under consideration is unsure, as there were several; the worse were AD 44-46, when Cuspius Fadus was governor of Judea.

over all the world; -- This geographical phrase is used to refer to the extent of the Roman Empire (cf. Acts 17:6; Acts 19:27; Acts 24:5).

and this took place in the days of Claudius. -- Claudius was the Roman Emperor from AD51 to 54 (when he was poisoned by one of his wives who wanted her son Nero on the throne.)

÷Acts 11:29
Acts 11:29

And the disciples determined, -- The church in Antioch, composed of a mixed culture of believing Jews and Gentiles, desired to show grace to their Jewish brother in Judea, just as those brethren had show grace to them in sharing the gospel.

every one according to his ability, -- The disciples gave individually as each was prospered and able to give. (see 2 Corinthians 9:6-9.)

to send relief to the brethren who lived in Judea; -- The churches in Judea had been ravaged by persecution and famine and many (probably the more affluent who could afford to migrate) who were probably best able to give relief in such severe times of distress, had been scattered to other places.

This matter of sharing in time of distress would set a pattern among the Gentile churches established by Paul to promote fellowship with their brethren in need in Jerusalem. (cf. Acts 24:17; Romans 15:2-28; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8–9; Galatians 2:10).

:Acts 11:30
Acts 11:30

and they did so, sending it to the elders -- This is the first mention of elders in the church. Here they are pictured as being in charge of the money delivered to the Judean brethren for famine relief.

The Greek word for "elders" is *presbyters*. In Acts 20:17 they are again mentioned and there also called *presbyters*, though in the same narrative (Acts 20:28) they are termed "overseers," *episcopoi*, that is, "bishops."

by the hand of Barnabas and Saul. -- The character and labours of these had marked them out as the most fit men to be bearers of this help, and it was from Jerusalem that Barnabas had been sent at first to Antioch.

Saul seems to have said this visit was fourteen years after his first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion, Galatians 1:18; Galatians 2:1. Note that the order here is "Barnabas and Saul". This order of their names will change later in their missionary journey.

:Acts 12:1
Acts 12:1

Time frame: about AD 44

Now about that time -- Perhaps the time referred to is the time of the famine predicted by Agabus. Perhaps the time is the time Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem. It is near the year AD 44.[1]

Herod the king. -- Herod Agrippa I is the man Luke is writing about. He appears only here in Acts 12 in the pages of the New Testament. He was born about 10 BC, the son of Aristobulus and Bernice, and thus was a grandson of Herod the Great and a brother of Herodias who asked for John the Baptist's head.

When Agrippa I, newly confirmed as king of Judea, arrived in Judea, he presented himself to the Jewish people as a devout worshiper. The last three years of his life are covered by events in Acts 12.2

Perhaps the persecution of the church by Herod Agrippa I was part of his attempt to win the favor of his new subjects in Judea. We may suppose that when he arrived in Judea, he found much popular excitement against the Christians, perhaps caused by the new step which had recently been taken in the admission of the Gentiles to the church.

laid hands on some who belonged to the church, in order to mistreat them. -- "Laid hands on" is the same expression used in Acts 4:3 and Acts 5:18 to signify an arrest in which the prisoners are roughly handled.

Those earlier persecutions were of a religious nature, instigated by the Sadducees. This time the persecution is encouraged by a civil ruler. It has been over eight years since the death of Stephen and the last persecution. Two of the church members who were "mistreated" are immediately singled out by Luke, though it is probable that more than these two were involved.

1 Compare Acts 11:20-25.

2 Josephus, *Antiquities*, XIX.7.3.

÷Acts 12:2

Acts 12:2

And he had James the brother of John put to death -- This was the son of Zebedee, one of the twelve original apostles. He was the first of the apostles to be martyred.[4]

Luke has told us nothing of James' work; but we may suppose he was doing significant evangelization, for otherwise it is hard to think of a reason for Herod or the Jews to make him a prime target of this persecution.

The death of James, the first apostle who suffered martyrdom, must have been a source of indescribable grief to the church in Jerusalem; and to an uninspired historian, it would have furnished matter for many pages of eloquent writing; what shall we think, then, of Luke as a writer, who disposes of it in a sentence of seven words in the Greek? Surely there is an indication here of some supernatural restraint upon the impulses of the writer, and it is accounted for only by his inspiration. McGarvey, op. cit., p.232.

With a sword. -- When being executed by a sword, a man would either be beheaded or pierced through. Had this apostle been tried by the Sanhedrin on a charge of blasphemy and heresy, the sentence would have been death by stoning, as in the case of Stephen.

Execution by means of a sword showed, as in the case of John the Baptist, that the sentence was pronounced by a civil ruler (adopting Roman modes of punishment). Execution by the sword was deemed by the Jews to be the most ignominious of the forms of capital punishment.

James is the only one of the Twelve of whose death there is any record in the New Testament, and how extremely brief is the record when compared with the details of Stephen's death.

÷Acts 12:3

Acts 12:3

And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, -- Luke is telling us that Agrippa I's motives were simply political expediency. It wasn't that he had any real anti-Christian fanaticism, nor was he particularly interested in justice or protecting the innocent.

he proceeded to arrest Peter also. -- Peter was one of the apostles of Christ, just as was James.

As a leader in the church, he would be a special target of this persecution if it were triggered by the church's acceptance of the Gentiles to fellowship without demanding of them all the old Jewish customs and taboos; in fact, he was the one who went to Cornelius' house and preached the gospel to them, and then he was the one who instructed all the Christians to do likewise as he defended his actions before the brethren in Jerusalem. Such actions would infuriate the fanatical Jews. When Peter was arrested, did he think that perhaps the time had come for Jesus' prediction (John 21:18-19) about his manner of death to be fulfilled?

Now it was during the days of Unleavened Bread. -- This speaks of the Feast of the Passover, and of the seven days immediately following that feast, when the Jews were required to eat unleavened bread.

This particular time chosen to arrest Peter because, at the Passover, there would be a larger number of Jews than ordinary in Jerusalem; this meant more people would be able to see Agrippa I's "zeal for the Law," and it would help his popularity with the people over whom he has been appointed king.

÷Acts 12:4
Acts 12:4

And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, -- After he was arrested, Peter was imprisoned, because during the time of the feast, it would have been deemed as improper to have taken time for a trial and execution of a supposed criminal.

So Peter is to be kept in custody until the Passover week is ended. Did Peter, in jail during the Passover season, think of how Jesus had been taken into custody at the same season, some years before?

delivering him to four squads of soldiers to guard him, -- Each "squad" consisted of four men. These sixteen soldiers were responsible for guarding the prisoner around the clock. The night was divided into four different watches, each three hours long.[10] Whether each squad of soldiers was on duty every twelve hours, or whether each squad was on duty for six hours before being relieved by the next one, we have no way of knowing. When each squad was on duty, two of the four were with Peter in the cell (verse 6), and two kept watch before the door of the prison.

Why such strict security measures for this prisoner? Remember that this is the third time Peter has been in jail. The last time, he escaped through what must have appeared to the authorities to be mysterious circumstances (Acts 5:18-19). This time the authorities are trying to make sure the prisoner doesn't escape.

intending after the Passover -- One problem a translator faces is choosing a word in the language of the translation that will help the reader to get a correct idea of what was said in the original.

At this place, the KJV reads "after Easter." The Greek has simply, "after the Passover," and there was no need for the KJV translators to use "Easter" at this place when they had elsewhere translated the same Greek word "Passover" and expected the reader who was familiar with the Old Testament nomenclature to understand.

Why then this translation in the KJV? One of the instructions given to the translators by James, King of England, was that they were not to change any of the accepted terms found in

the Bishops' Bible (which was more or less the basis for the KJV). Before that version, Tyndale and Coverdale had used the word "Easter" at this place; hence, it had become a customary rendering of this verse before it was ever incorporated in the KJV.

The use of the word "Easter" in the KJV has led some to suppose the early church was already, in Herod Agrippa I's time, having special services of celebration at Easter time. In fact, however, no such festival as Easter was observed in the early church, and was not for several centuries.

During the New Testament times, the Christians did not celebrate with a special service in honor of the resurrection on one particular day of the year, as is the current custom in many places in our time. The early Christians celebrated His resurrection every Lord's Day by keeping the Lord's Supper and worshiping.

to bring him out before the people. -- Agrippa I apparently is planning to have a public trial and execution. It is part of a carefully programmed and orchestrated effort to curry the favor of the people.

÷Acts 12:5
Acts 12:5

So Peter was kept in the prison, -- Things do not always work out the way men plan, especially when God is not included in the plans. Herod Agrippa I intended to execute Peter as soon as Passover week was ended. Instead, his own death was nearer than that of Peter's. Peter was kept in the prison, and the days of the week passed, until the last night of Passover week.

but prayer for him was being made fervently by the church to God. -- The adverb "*fervently*" implies both intensity and continuity.[14] The verb tense indicates that all the while Peter was being held, the church was continuing to pray for him.

The picture is that the members of the congregation continued to meet, in spite of the persecution, perhaps in the home of Mary (Acts 12:12), to send up prayers day and night to the throne of God.

prayer -- For what were they praying? Apparently not for Peter's release, for they are surprised when he shows up at their prayer service. Probably they were praying for him to be courageous, and not recant his faith like he did the night of Jesus' arrest.

÷Acts 12:6
Acts 12:6

Time frame: Passover = Saturday to Saturday, is this then Saturday night?

And on the very night when Herod was about to bring him forward, -- It is the night preceding the day when Peter was to be executed. It would be Saturday night, for the Passover week would end at 6:00 p.m. on Saturday. Peter could be executed on Sunday morning without profaning the services of the week of Unleavened Bread.

Peter was sleeping -- It is difficult to sleep peacefully when the mind is filled with apprehension, or when the conscience is reproving because of some sin that is known and unconfessed.

That Peter is able to sleep so calmly when tomorrow he will be executed suggests that he has no fear of dying. It also suggests that his conscience is at peace because Peter is covered by the blood of Christ. Peter was prepared, if that is what the morrow brought, to be with Jesus again.

between two soldiers, bound with two chains, -- Peter was chained to the two, one arm chained to one soldier's arm, and his other arm chained to the other soldier's arm. Is it implied that the two soldiers on either side of Peter were also sleeping, as was the prisoner? Is that why they give no alarm when the prisoner leaves?

and guards in front of the door were watching over the prison. -- Two soldiers of the four-man squad were stationed at the door of the cell in which Peter was bound, or perhaps one was at the door, and the other was at the beginning of the tunnel that led to the inner dungeon in which Peter was kept (Acts 12:10).

God is able to deliver Peter in spite of all the precautions of men – soldiers, prison, chains, iron gates. The wisdom of God so surpasses that of men, that He is able to overcome even the most ingenious man-made plans.

:Acts 12:7
Acts 12:7

and behold, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared. -- Either the angel is pictured as moving from the sky suddenly down into the room, or once in the room he suddenly becomes visible after having entered the cell in an invisible form. "Appeared" is Luke's regular word used for angelic appearances,[16] and is also used of our Lord's appearance to Paul.[17]

and a light shone in the cell. This was not a flash of lightning. Light, splendor, and shining apparel are commonly represented as the accompaniments of heavenly beings when they visit the earth.[19]

Whether or not the glow was seen only by Peter, or also by the soldiers, is not stated. The light did not awaken Peter, so the angel had to awaken him.

and he struck Peter's side and roused him, saying, "Get up quickly." -- It is often difficult to rouse a person from a sound sleep, and this is true for the angel who woke Peter.

Are the guards chained to Peter stunned or asleep? At the resurrection of Jesus, the guards were stunned,[20] and some think a similar thing was done to the guards on either side of Peter and in the hall outside. In the absence of any specific word about their being stunned, some have urged that those inside with Peter were asleep along with Peter.

It is true that guards at their posts – like those in the hall outside the door of the cell – could be put to death for sleeping at their posts. But those on the inside were in a little different situation.

and his chains fell off his hands. -- The removal of the chains was something miraculous.

The suggestion that Manaen,[21] or some other human agent,[22] slipped in and freed Peter, is shown by this phrase to be too absurd to seriously consider. Further, this phrase shows that the

suggestion that the "light" in the cell was lightning will not satisfy all the requirements of the text. It would have been strange lightning indeed that unchained Peter without disturbing the soldiers chained to him on either side, and at the same time made it possible for him to rise, put on his sandals and outer garments, and to walk from the prison.

16 Luke 2:9, Luke 24:4.

17 Acts 23:11.

19 Luke 2:9, Luke 24:4; Mark 9:3.

20 Matthew 28:4.

21 Acts 13:1

22 ***Aggelos***, the word translated "angel," can be translated "messenger" and thus speak of a human rather than angelic person.

÷Acts 12:8
Acts 12:8

And the angel said to him, "Gird yourself. -- When lying down to sleep, people of the 1st century laid aside their outer garments[23] (or used them for a cover), loosened the belt that bound the inner garment to the waist, and took off their sandals.

23 The outer garment was a large piece of cloth, nearly square

Peter was directed by the angel to fasten his belt, and put on his outer garment, that is, to get dressed and get ready to go out. Peter now knew the time to be girded by another (John 21:18) had not yet arrived.

and put on your sandals." -- The Greek *sandalion* occurs only here and at Mark 6:9 in the New Testament. It regularly stands for shoes worn by the poor, a sole made of wood or leather, bound to the foot by thongs.

and he did so. -- Peter follows the angel's instructions explicitly.

And he said to him, "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me." -- Peter is now instructed to put his outer garment around his shoulders. The angel then leads the way toward freedom, with Peter following close behind.

÷Acts 12:9
Acts 12:9

And he went out and continued to follow, and he did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. -- On "vision" see notes at Acts 9:10. It has been suggested that when Peter hit the cool night air, it really woke him up, and only then did he realize for the first time what was happening to him was more than a dream.

÷Acts 12:10
Acts 12:10

And when they had passed the first and second guard, -- The soldiers outside the cell apparently were stationed at intervals in the entry way into the prison. These guards were passed silently. Probably something happened like was done to the two on the way to Emmaus, whose "eyes were prevented" (Luke 24:16), so that Peter's guards were unaware of what was happening.

they came to the iron gate that leads into the city, -- Perhaps the language means that the prison was outside the walls of the city, someplace like the Tower of Antonia. There would have been a door separating the barracks from the pavement and the door would have opened onto a raised platform above the pavement.

which opened for them by itself; -- The Greek word is *automatē*, i.e., automatically. There was no key used, nor force of any kind like a battering ram or a kick. As Peter and the angel approached the gate, it just swung open to allow them to pass through into the city. When we reflect on how such security gates would be barred for the night, that it opened of its own accord is miraculous indeed.

and they went out and went along one street, -- The angel accompanied Peter until he was one block away from the prison door. The word "street" is the one that speaks of the narrow streets of the city.

> Codex Beza tells us that after they went out through the opened gate, they "went down seven steps," and then through the city streets. This too would fit what we know of the Tower of Antonia, so that likely the prison in which Peter was held was inside that fortress.

and immediately the angel departed from him. -- The angel stayed with Peter until there was no further need of such supernatural aid as he had rendered to get Peter outside the prison. God's messenger had effected Peter's complete rescue; now Peter is able to make it on his own, in a natural human manner.

÷Acts 12:11
Acts 12:11

And when Peter came to himself, -- There is the tone of a personal remembrance in these words, as though Luke has learned these details from Peter himself. There he was, at night, free, standing in the open street. Peter thinks about it for a moment. He is not dreaming! It has actually happened, and he is on the outside of the prison, a free man.

he said, "Now I know for sure that the Lord has sent forth His angel -- "Lord" is probably a reference to the Father rather than Christ. Just as in his previous prison stay (Acts 5:19), God has sent an angel to deliver Peter. Reflecting on all that happened, Peter is satisfied that what he saw was an angel, and that he was delivered by divine help.

and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting." -- Peter knew what the future held in store for him: he had been in prison awaiting execution. Peter had recognized that Herod's desire to be popular, and that the earnest desire of the unconverted Jews to exterminate Christianity, were the chief motivations behind his pending death. Those Jews

who were present in great numbers at Jerusalem during the Passover week were talking about and anticipating Peter's death.

:Acts 12:12
Acts 12:12

And when he realized *this,* -- The NKJV's translation is probably better at this place when it uses the verb "*considered*," for the word seems to include a consideration of the future. Peter quickly surveys the situation as a whole, weighing the possibilities of what he should do.

> The apostle James was already dead. Many in the church were being harassed. He himself had been facing sentence and execution at the hands of Agrippa I. In a few hours, daylight would bring a change of guards, and then the alarm would sound when it was learned the prisoner had escaped. If he did not wish to be rearrested, he had to act promptly.

he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John -- This house appears to be a regular meeting place for the Christians. It is very possible that it was in this home that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, and that it has been a center of Christian activity since Pentecost. If so, it appears that this is a family of Christians who stayed in Jerusalem in spite of the persecution that scattered many of the others (Acts 8:1 ff).

who was also called Mark, -- This is probably the young man who fled into the night, leaving the sheet which was his only outer covering, as Jesus was being arrested and led away to trial.[25] He is the one who later wrote the second Gospel, recording in that book what Peter used to preach.[26] Mark is his Latin name; John is his Hebrew name. Peter calls Mark "my son,"[27] which likely means that Peter led him to Christ.

Mark is frequently named later in the New Testament as he accompanies Paul, Barnabas, and Peter on their missionary journeys.[28] In Colossians 4:10, he is called a cousin of Barnabas.[29]

where many were gathered together and were praying. -- The implication may be that this was but one of several prayer meetings being held in homes in and around Jerusalem. Acts 12:25 perhaps even implies that Paul and Barnabas were included in the group meeting in Mary's home for prayer.

> We may picture it as being sometime after midnight when Peter arrives at the home of Mary. If he escaped before midnight, his absence would have been discovered before daylight given the timing of the changing of the guards. When he arrived at the house, the brethren have been praying. But for what were they praying? Acts 12:5 might seem, on first sight, to indicate that they were praying for Peter's release. But since Jesus taught his followers to pray believing they would have what they asked for, it is likely they have *not* been praying for Peter's release. Otherwise they would not have been amazed when Peter showed up at the door. ...
>
> ... Most likely they directed their prayers more to aid Peter's faith and courage in the hour of death than for his release. No doubt they asked for wisdom in trying to decide what they themselves should do, where they should go to escape, or if they should stand and die for their faith. (McGarvey)

house of Mary -- The house where they met for the Lord's last supper with them was perhaps the house belonging to Mary, the sister of Barnabas and mother of Mark, where they assembled in Acts

12:12; see Colossians 4:10; Acts 12:25. It was a large house and the owner had servants. Such large complexes kept an upper room for guests. Especially in Jerusalem they kept it for visitors who came to the feasts. This household appears to have been disciples of Jesus.

One clue that makes us think this was also the house of the Last Supper, is Mark's statement in Mark 14:51 where it is believed that Mark is referring to himself. If Mark was the one following Jesus and the apostles to the garden, it would probably have been that he followed them from his home when they left in the night. Probably already in bed he only grabbed a linen cloth (sheet) to wrap around his naked body and followed them.

Most likely it is also the same house where the disciples met (and hid) after the Lord's crucifixion John 20:19; John 20:26;
It could also be the same house mentioned in Acts 1:13.

praying -- For what were they praying? Apparently not for Peter's release, for they are surprised when he shows up at their prayer service. Probably they were praying for him to be courageous, and not recant his faith like he did the night of Jesus' arrest.

25 Mark 14:51.

26 Eusebius, *Church History*, III.39.

27 1 Peter 5:13.

28 Acts 12:25, Acts 13:5, Acts 15:39; 2 Timothy 4:11; 1 Peter 5:13.

29 The Greek word ***anepsios*** means "first cousin," not "sister's son" as the KJV reads.

÷Acts 12:13
Acts 12:13

When he knocked at the door of die gate, -- Imagine what went through the minds of the brethren gathered inside when there is a knock at the door, at the outside passage way (porch) that leads from the inner court to the street! Have the persecutors come here to this well-known meeting place of Christians to take some more away to prison and death?

a servant-girl [damsel] named Rhoda came to answer. -- We picture Rhoda as being 12 or 13 years old. The task of being doorkeeper was commonly assigned to a young female slave. Visitors, upon arriving at the door, would call out. If the girl recognized the voice, she would unbolt the door and allow them to enter. If not, she would go and get one of the men of the house, who would come and admit or reject the visitor, as the case might require.

"Rhoda" is a Greek name signifying "a rose." It was not out of the ordinary for girls to be named after flowers (thus Susanna, a lily; Tamar, palm tree).

"***Answer***" is a Greek idiom meaning she came to answer the knock at the door.

÷Acts 12:14
Acts 12:14

And when she recognized Peter's voice, -- Peter has been a visitor to this house before, if his voice was familiar to the servant girl. Peter must have been calling out, "Hurry, open the door!"

bcause of her joy she did not open the gate. -- At this time of night, and in a situation where they feared what the Jews might do, the door would be locked and bolted.

The Greek reads "***the joy***;" that is, the joy she felt at hearing the voice of Peter. She is so eager to share the good news she feels that she fails for the moment to have presence of mind to open the door to the one standing outside.

but ran in and announced that Peter was standing in front of the gate. -- Rhoda was aware of what the people gathered inside the house had been praying. Now here was Peter! In her joy she hastened through the porch to the interior of the house to tell them the latest news about the one they had been praying for.

÷Acts 12:15
Acts 12:15

And they said to her, "You are out of your mind!" -- The expression should not be taken literally, but in a colloquial sense. They apparently have not been praying for Peter's release, for that was so unexpected that when Rhoda affirms he is outside, they accuse her of being out of her mind.

but she kept insisting that it was so. -- With a positive look on her face, and a confident tone to her voice, Rhoda insists over and over again that Peter is too at the door!

And they kept saying, "It is his angel." -- Jews held a common belief that every Israelite had a guardian angel.[32] Reflecting those Jewish ideas, the Christians assembled inside must have been assuming that Peter's guardian angel had appeared in human form (resembling Peter), and was speaking in Peter's voice (which he must also have assumed).

> It is not clear why they supposed Peter's angel had come to visit. Some suppose they would imagine the angel came to announce something respecting Peter, in order to motivate them to greater prayer on his behalf. Others suppose they thought the angel's presence at the gate meant Peter was already dead; having no longer any job as Peter's guardian angel, he was free to be standing at the gate.
>
> What we have here is evidently an old Jewish belief held by these Christians, just as people today often retain many of their old ideas long after they become Christians. Sometimes these old ideas are right, and sometimes they are very wrong.
>
> [32] Alfred Edenheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947), Vol. II. p.748-55, especially p.752.

÷Acts 12:16
Acts 12:16

But Peter continued knocking; -- What must have been Peter's thoughts as he stood in the street for some minutes, continually knocking and calling out, while the people inside argued with Rhoda? What if a Roman soldier or someone else had come along? He might be right back in jail!

and when they had opened *the door,* they saw him and were amazed. -- The people inside finally go to the door to see for themselves. Sure enough, it is Peter! Amazing! 'How did you get out of the prison, and how did you get here?!?' Excitement causes them all to ask questions at once.

÷Acts 12:17
Acts 12:17

But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, -- A speaker who wishes his audience to become quiet so that he can be heard often shakes his hand (palm toward the people) up and down, thus indicating his desire for silence.

We can almost picture Peter also saying "Shhh!" as he beckons for silence. A great noise at that time of night might excite neighboring Jews, who would call the authorities, and then it's right back in jail, not only for Peter, but maybe for the others also.

beckoning -- This sounds like the words of an eye witness.

Peter described to them how the Lord had led him out of the prison. See verses 6 to 10 where it was all described.

And he said, "Report these things to James and the brethren." -- James and some of the other Christians are not at the house of Mary. The "James" of this verse is likely the one who later takes a leading part in the Jerusalem Conference, and seems to be a leader in the work of the congregation at Jerusalem. Paul identifies him as the Lord's brother.

Who were "the brethren?" Perhaps it is a reference to the apostles. Perhaps it is a reference to other members of the Jerusalem church who are not present in Mary's home, but who may have been meeting that night in prayer meetings all over the city.

and he departed and went to another place. -- Perhaps Mary's house being used as a meeting place for Christians was a fact too well known for Peter to remain there if he would escape from Agrippa I.

Where Peter went is not known for sure, though the word translated "departed" seems to mean he "went out" of Jerusalem. Some think he went to Asia Minor (1 Peter 1:1) or Greece (1 Corinthians 9:5), and there gave the rest of his life in work for Christ. Peter did evangelize in both these places, but not this early, in most commentator's opinion.

Another view is that Peter was just getting out of the city of Jerusalem for a short time in order to escape the persecution. He did eventually return to Jerusalem, for he was present for the Jerusalem Conference seven years after this escape.[45]

another place -- Is this then documentation for the date that Peter left Jerusalem? About AD 44.

[45] Acts 15:7. The persecution will die down, and there will be less danger to Peter, once Herod Agrippa I has died, so Peter will be able to return to Jerusalem for the Conference.

÷Acts 12:18
Acts 12:18

Now when day came, -- The fact that Peter was not discovered as missing until dawn makes us believe the soldiers were on six-hour shifts, and that Peter's escape came after midnight; otherwise, he would have been discovered as missing before dawn.

there was no small disturbance among the soldiers *as to* what could have become of Peter. -- It is hard to find an English word to convey the idea behind the word translated "disturbance." There was a scurrying around as they frantically searched for the missing prisoner, a hundred questions flashing through their minds, and apprehension about what would soon happen to them.

> Roman law required that, if the prisoner escapes, the guards suffer the same penalty the prisoner would have received. It is not quite possible to translate the last part of the verse smoothly, for it represents the perplexity of one of the soldiers who asks, "What then has become of him?"

÷Acts 12:19
Acts 12:19

And when Herod had searched for him and had not found him, -- Herod might have been moved (as Nebuchadnezzar and Darius were, by the miraculous preservation of God's men in the furnace and the den of lions) to become a worshiper of the true God. He might have remembered the failure of his grandfather's attempt to make the wisemen from the East instruments in discovering and destroying the Infant at Bethlehem.

The information he learns as he searches for Peter should have pointed him to God, but it did not. Perhaps it was pride that kept Agrippa I in rebellion against God.

he examined the guards. -- The word "***examine***" is the regular word for a judicial investigation, a cross-examination. It is as though the squad of soldiers is subjected to a court martial in which they are thoroughly questioned about the escape of the prisoner. Following the examination, those conducting the inquiry, including Herod, must have known that it was another miracle of God that had freed Peter.

> When those standing in front of the gate were examined, we can see that the only answer they could give was, "We kept our post all night; we remained wide awake, and no one passed in or out of that gate!" When the man who kept the key of the iron gate was called, he truthfully said that it had not been out of his hand nor had it been placed in the lock. The two guards between the outer door and Peter's cell were positive that no one had passed by them during the night. And the two to whom Peter had been chained could only say, "When we went to sleep he was there with the chains all secure, and when we awoke he was gone, and that's all we know." Of course, none of these statements could be true unless a stupendous miracle had been wrought; and there was absolutely no alternative, but to admit the miracle, or to hold that all of the soldiers had conspired together to voluntarily release the prisoner. The last horn of the dilemma could not be accepted by any sane man, seeing that the soldiers knew perfectly well that their lives would pay the forfeit of such a release. It seems, then, impossible to believe that Herod doubted the reality of the miracle, or the truthfulness of the soldiers; but he was determined not

to admit the miracle; and he deliberately chose in preference the murder of several innocent soldiers.–(McGarvey, p.239)

and ordered that they be led away *to execution.* -- They were killed, as Roman law required, for having failed to keep Peter in prison. Some writers think that all sixteen were killed, others that only the squad of four on duty when the prisoner escaped were executed.

It does not seem to be implied that any further search was made for Peter once the court martial of the soldiers was completed. Is this a tacit admission by Herod that he knew God's hand was in the deliverance of the man whose life he had planned to take?

And he went down from Judea to Caesarea. -- After Peter's escape, how soon Herod left Jerusalem is not known. These journeys of Herod are related by Josephus, who indicates it was after Herod had reigned over all Judea for three years. This would be in AD 44 (Josephus, *Antiquities*, XIX.8.2.)

and was spending time there. -- That is, until his death, which occurred during this visit to Caesarea. Apparently, Agrippa I caused no further persecution against Peter or against the Christians.

:Acts 12:20
Acts 12:20

The Death of Herod and the Return of Barnabas and Paul. *Acts 12:20-25*

Now he was very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon; -- The Greek word translated "***very angry"*** means to be angry enough to plan war against them. Agrippa I planned a war against them to vent his anger, but we do not know the cause of the trouble.

Tyre and Sidon were part of the Roman province of Syria, and therefore not in his own kingdom (as granted by Rome). To wage war against them would be very dangerous, and so his anger was extreme, to be willing to take such chances of infuriating Rome.

Some have guessed that since Tyre and Sidon were seaports, they have just placed some economic sanctions on goods from Herod's lands that passed through the ports, and this is what angered Herod so. He has let the two ports know, in no uncertain terms, just how angry he is.

and with one accord they came to him, -- Fearing that he would do what he threatened to do, the two cities got together and sent ambassadors to Herod. The ambassadors spoke for both cities.

and having won over Blastus the king's chamberlain, -- "Blastus" is a Roman name, and it may imply that Herod, in his effort to copy Roman habits, has selected a Roman for his confidential aide. It is probable that the ambassadors from Tyre and Sidon used bribery to win Blastus as their friend. A "***chamberlain***" denotes an officer who was in charge of the king's bed chamber.

they were asking for peace, -- The ambassadors had likely bribed Blastus in order to get an audience with Herod. Herod granted the audience, and the ambassadors were asking that Herod abandon his plans to make war against their cities.

because their country was fed by the king's country. -- Tyre and Sidon had large populations, and there was not enough farm land nearby to raise food for all the people. Therefore, the cities were dependent on Galilee for their food supply,[50] and Galilee was part of Herod's kingdom. If Herod carried out his threatened war, many people would starve to death. Tyre and Sidon are surrendering to Herod's demands.

50. 1 Kings 5:8-11; 2 Chronicles 2:10; Ezra 3:7; Ezekiel 27:17.

÷Acts 12:21
Acts 12:21

And on an appointed day -- Josephus tells us this was the second day of the sports and games held in Caesarea, at Herod's insistence, in honor of Claudius Caesar.[51]

The festival in honor of Claudius was held each year, beginning on August 1. The one in AD 44 could have involved special thanksgiving for Claudius' recent safe return from Britain.

Herod, having put on his royal apparel, -- Josephus tells us Agrippa I had put on a robe of silver tissue, such as Caligula used to wear at banquets and games in Rome. The garment glittered with a dazzling brightness as the rays of the morning sun reflected off of it.

took his seat on the rostrum. -- The marginal note reads "on the judgment seat." Josephus tells us it was in the theater at Caesarea that Herod the Great had built. Agrippa I was in his special box at the theater, about half-way up, right in the midst of the crowd.

and *began* delivering an address to them. -- Neither Luke nor Josephus tells us what the subject of Herod's speech was. Some suggest from the context here in Acts that Agrippa I was announcing the agreement with Tyre and Sidon, which brought a great cheer from the crowd when they learned that harmony was restored between the two countries.

But the truth is, we do not know what he said that should cause the people to respond as they did. Perhaps the people are copying the kind of cries usually given to Caesar when he dressed and appeared in public as Herod has done. Caesar was often hailed as a god.

51 Josephus, *Antiquities*, XIX.8.2. Actually, the occasion for this festival is uncertain. Some suggest it was a birthday celebration in honor of Claudius' birthday. Others have suggested it was a festival in honor of his return from Britain. Still others have called it the *Quinquennalia*, instituted by Herod the Great in honor of Caesar Augustus in 12 BC, and held every five years to honor whoever was the reigning Caesar.

÷Acts 12:22
Acts 12:22

And the people kept crying out, "The voice of a god and not of a man!" -- It was a loud cheer because of what Herod had said. The verb tense shows the people kept it up. The glamor of the dress, and the address delivered, result in the people giving Herod the kind of flattery he longed to receive.

We do not picture the Jews as joining in this acclamation; rather, it was made by the Gentiles who had come to a theater in honor of Caesar. (The Greek word translated people is *dēmos*, a different word than Luke uses when he means "Jewish people" (i.e., *laos*).)

÷Acts 12:23
Acts 12:23

Herod died in AD 44.

And immediately an angel of the Lord stuck him -- Epidemics and even death which are intended as punishments on people because of their sins are often attributed to the action of an angel. Such language is not simply the superstition of a benighted people. Rather, we might well believe that such things still happen in the unseen world!

The sickness that led to Agrippa I's death was a divine judgment because he did not rebuke the crowd when they paid him their sacrilegious homage.

because he did not give God the glory. -- Josephus expressly says that the king did not rebuke the flattery or reject their flattery. Agrippa I was enough Jewish, and enough acquainted with the Law of Moses, that he knew better than to permit the people to do what they were doing.

There may be more in the language than a suggestion Herod was at fault because he was willing to receive the kind of worship that only God should receive. In the Old Testament, "give glory to God" was often connected with the confession of sin.

and he was eaten by worms -- According to classical Greek lexicons, under the word *skōlēx*, these intestinal worms were similar in size and appearance to what we call earthworms (see Ascaris Lumbricoides in Webster's dictionary).

Josephus tells how a terrible pain in the abdomen seized Herod as he addressed the crowd. He collapsed in his box at the theater, and was carried out a dying man. He lingered five days before he died.

and died. -- The Greek phrase translated "***died***" is the same as was translated "breathed his last" at Acts 5:5. His soul left the body. Herod Agrippa I died, according to Josephus "in the 54th year of his life, being the seventh year of his reign."[57] The year is AD 44, and from this we can date the death of James at a time just prior to Passover (May 1, AD 44), and the release of Peter a week or so later.

Agrippa I's son, Herod Agrippa II, was only seventeen years of age at the time of his father's death, so Judea passed into the hands of a governor, Cuspius Fadus, whose unpopularity with the Jewish authorities gave the Christians a temporary respite from persecution.

57 *Antiquities,* XIX.8.2.

÷Acts 12:24
Acts 12:24

But the word of the Lord continued to grow and to be multiplied. --The verse begins with "but," marking a contrast. The persecution had been intended to slow or finish the church, *but* the

persecutor is slowed and finished; and *instead* the church continues to grow. She grows in spite of all obstacles. The verb tenses imply continuous expansion. The preaching of the gospel results in numerous conversions.

Perhaps too the providential death of Herod Agrippa I, so soon after his attempt to persecute the Church and his execution of James, would make a great impression on the mind of the people, which in turn caused them to take the gospel seriously.

As has been observed previously, Luke's use of such statements about the growth of the church is an indication that he is about to turn to another subject.

÷Acts 12:25
Acts 12:25

And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem -- The names are still in this order because Barnabas is the more prominently recognized of the two. Because we read of the death of James, and the imprisonment and release of Peter, and the painful and loathsome death of Herod Agrippa I, between Luke's statements about the arrival and departure of Barnabas and Paul from Jerusalem, we take it that Luke is saying these events occurred in the interval between.

when they had fulfilled their mission.-- They had gone to Jerusalem to deliver the relief funds which had been contributed at Syrian Antioch. Now they are returning to Antioch from whence they had made the trip (Acts 11:30).

taking along with *them* John, who was also called Mark. -- ***"Taking along***" is a word which indicates a certain subordination. The choice is probably explained partly by his relationship to Barnabas (see notes at Acts 12:12).

÷Acts 13:1