

***The Witness in Jerusalem (Acts 1:8)***  
***Acts 3:1 – 6:7***

Section One: Resurrection, Ascension, and Pentecost (Acts 1-2)

Section Two: The Witness of Signs, Preaching, and Community (Acts 3-6:7)

***I. Healing of the Lame Beggar – Acts 3:1-26***

- A. The purpose of signs and wonders: to display God’s person, power, and proclaim his message (“sign language”)
- B. “Look at us” – “Why are you looking at us?": vv. 4, 12
  - “We are witnesses...” – v. 15 (Note John 1:5 ff)
- C. Peter’s second sermon
  1. Solomon’s Portico (Note also John 10:23 – “The works I do bear witness of me...”)
  2. Once again, the focus of the message is on Jesus; the Gospel is the message concerning what God has done in and through Jesus.
    - The Servant
    - The Holy and Righteous One
    - Author of Life
    - Prophet like Moses
    - Seed of Abraham
  - Because the message of the Old Testament is about “these days” (v. 24)
  3. The call to faith in the name of Jesus (v. 16)
  4. The call to repentance
  5. The “look” of salvation (v. 26)
  6. Peter’s eschatology – Acts 3:21
  7. Results – Acts 4:4

***II. Arrest by Sadducees – Acts 4:1-22***

- A. Sadducees’ opposition to resurrection
- B. Peter’s third sermon – 4:8-12 (a defense, or *apologia*)
  1. Focus is once again on Jesus: he moves from the sign to the person to whom the sign pointed.
    - “The man standing before you should point you past him to another.”
  2. The stone and the builders (Psalm 118; Matthew 21-23)
    - A VERY serious rebuke; VERY bold; VERY dangerous and provocative
    - “They had been with Jesus.” (v. 13)
- C. Warning – Acts 4:13-22

**III. Community Life – Acts 4:23-37**

- A. Submissive, Scripture-soaked prayer – vv. 23-30
  - 1. Grant that –
    - a. We may have greater boldness
    - b. You stretch out your hand
  - 2. The human and divine agencies in evangelism: incarnational theology (incarnational Calvinism)
- B. Faithful preaching – v. 31
- C. Sacrificial community – vv. 32-37
  - Joseph Barnabus introduced
- D. Continued power in the Spirit – v. 33 (“Great Grace”)

**IV. The Fear of the Lord – Acts 5:1-16**

- A. The sin of Ananias and Sapphira – 5:1-11
  - 1. “Keeping back” – same word for Achan in Joshua 7:1
    - Judgment on the two was mercy for all
  - 2. Lying to the Holy Spirit – “God” (v. 4)
  - 3. The Presence of the Spirit in the Church
    - Central role of Peter in pronouncing judgment (like Joshua succeeding Moses)
- B. Signs and wonders - 5:12-16
  - 1. Seasons of the miraculous in redemptive history
    - a. Moses
    - b. Elijah and Elisha
    - c. Jesus and the Apostles
  - 2. The Shadow of Peter
    - Luke 1:35; 9:34 – the overshadowing presence of God

**V. The Beginning of Opposition and Persecution of the Church – Acts 5:17-42**

Note that the Church is afflicted first INSIDE and then from the OUTSIDE. It is always true that the enemy seeks to work in both ways.

- A. Arrest of the apostles by the Sadducees – 5:17-21
  - Angelic interventions in Acts
- B. The word of God is not bound – 5:22-26
- C. Peter’s fourth sermon, another *apologia*
  - 1. All about Jesus
  - 2. Resurrection and rule
  - 3. Repentance and forgiveness (note for Israel)
    - “This man’s blood upon us” – the goal of all good Gospel preaching!
    - Note also Matthew 27:25
- D. Gamaliel’s temperate counsel – 5:33-39

- E. Apostolic response to suffering for the Gospel – 5:40-42
  - 1. Rejoicing
  - 2. Continuing ministry
    - \* “Kill us, torture us, condemn us, grind us to dust...the more you mow us down, the more we grow; the seed (of the Church) is the blood of Christians...”  
– Tertullian, “Apology,” 2<sup>nd</sup> Century
  - 3. The limits of human authority (5:29)

**VI. *The Beginning of New Unity and Ministry in the Church – Acts 6:1-7***

- A. The Hellenists and the Judeans – v. 1
- B. Apostolic oversight and ministerial priority – v. 2
- C. Qualified leadership – v. 3
  - 1. Chose Hellenists to do this
  - 2. Ordained by the Apostles
    - “Deacons” are not mentioned here, though “*diakonia*” is used in vv. 1-2. It is possible to conclude that this is the beginning of diaconal ministry. But it should be noted that these men do not confine their work to the ministry of distribution of goods. Note Acts 6:8.
    - This could well be the beginning of eldership as well. (We will frequently read of the Apostles laying hands on elders.)
    - The diversity of gifts and calling in the Church make for a continuing growth in fruitfulness.
- D. Result: word increases and the number of disciples increases, including the conversion of numerous Jewish priests – Acts 6:7.