

- Last week we started our study of the book of Acts. We started by noting that the books' formal name is Acts of the Apostles, and that it was written by the apostle Luke. We noted that the book was written to the same person to whom Luke wrote his gospel account, and we noted the fact that between the two books, Luke wrote more of the content of the New Testament than any other author. We then looked specifically at the first two chapters in the book of Acts, including Christ's instructions to the followers prior to going back to heaven, as well as the events surrounding what we call the day of Pentecost. Finally, we looked at the way the first Christians were conducting themselves with one another.
- This week we will look at the way the apostles and followers of Christ were conducting themselves immediately after Christ's departure. The apostles are essentially following Christ's pattern of preaching and healing. We will see how Peter and John performed a notable miracle early on, how Peter preached another gospel sermon. We will look at how the apostles behaved when persecuted, and how believers in the early church were conducting themselves. We will also look at the consequences for disobedience by believers. We will also look at how nonbelieving political leaders treated the apostles.
- There was man who was born unable to walk who was hanging out at the temple and asking for money. He asked Peter and John for money as they were going by. They told him they did not have any money, but offered him what they had. Then they healed in the name of Christ and people saw him running around and were amazed. (Acts 3:1-10)
- The same people who saw him healed recognized it was Peter who healed him, so like he learned from Christ, Peter uses this miracle as a teaching moment. He tells them that the same God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (whom they held in high regard) had glorified the man they crucified Jesus Christ, in whose name they had healed the man. (Acts 3:11-16)
- Peter uses the names of Moses and Samuel (and Abraham again) and says they all predicted Christ's coming. Then he tells them to repent. (Acts 3:17-26)
- This speech (especially a reference to Christ's resurrection which is not recorded but they must have made) really annoys the religious leaders and they arrest Peter and John. But in one sense it is too late – they have already made an impact, and at least 5,000 people were converted. (Acts 4:1-4)
- We probably don't read about everyone who was coming to Christ at that time. But in addition to the five thousand men who came now, remember that there were 3,000 men who came to Christ through baptism at Peter's first teaching. (Acts 2:38-41) That alone is 8,000 people who were baptized into Christ.
- The next day, Peter and John are brought before the same Jewish religious leaders (Annas and Caiaphas) who had presided over two of Christ's trials. Other officials and their family members were present. Peter starts to speak with them, being filled with the Holy Spirit. The fact that scripture tells us he was filled with the Holy Spirit is significant because Christ had specifically told the apostles that when they were arrested and put on trial NOT to

prepare what they would say because the Holy Spirit would help them know what to say. (Mark 13:11) (Acts 4:5-8)

- Peter tells them that they should know if they are being put on trial for healing a lame man, they did so in the name of the same person they had crucified. (Acts 4:9-10)
- He tells them the person they rejected has become the chief cornerstone. That is in fulfillment of the prophecy made by David in Psalms 118:22. The cornerstone was a stone that was used as the main stone at the top of an arch which held everything together. Christ is the key cornerstone of the church (Ephesians 2:20). Peter concludes by saying Christ is the only person who can save us. (Acts 4:11-12)
- The religious leaders are not happy that Peter and John have done this thing, but they know they cannot deny it was done, so they tell Peter and John not to speak of Christ anymore. (Acts 4:13-17)
- Peter and John tell them that they must listen to God not them. They let Peter and John go. We also find out the man born lame they had healed was over 40 years old. (Acts 4:18-22)
- When the followers of Christ hear this, they start praying. They quote David in Psalms 2:1-2 by wondering why the kings are opposing them and pray that they will be able to speak the name of Jesus boldly. (Acts 4:23-31)
- Those who followed Christ were continuing to behave communally, having all things in common. There were no needy. People were selling their possessions and contributing them to the community fund. We read specifically about the apostle Barnabas (nicknamed the son of encouragement) selling a field. (Acts 4:32-37)
- There was a couple named Ananias and Sapphira who sold some property to contribute it. They held some money back, then told the apostles they did not. They were both stricken dead by God for their dishonesty. The Bible is clear that they were not killed for keeping some for themselves, they were punished for lying to God. (Acts 5:1-11)
- The apostles were performing many signs and miracles in Jerusalem. It was so well known that people were putting sick people on mats in the street hoping that Peter's shadow would go over them so they could be healed that way. (Acts 5:12-16)
- For doing these things the apostles are arrested. They are told that they were told not to preach the name of Christ. The apostles said they must obey God not man. Then one of the leaders named Gamaliel who had been a mentor to many, including the apostle Paul (who was being called Saul still) (Acts 22:3), stood up in front the Sanhedrin (the Jewish political/religious leadership group that was deciding Stephen's fate) and said that lots of people claimed to be something they weren't before and when they were gone their following died out, so either 1) the same thing will happen to them or 2) if it doesn't and it is real it must be from God. (Acts 5:17-42)
- The 12 original apostles dealt with a dispute from the Gentiles who said that their widows were being neglected in favor of Jewish widows. The apostles recognize the legitimacy of the complaints but do not want to take time out of their preaching to address this issue. So, they appoint deacons to better serve them and deal with these types of issues. They

give these deacons the power to perform miracles too and they convert lots of people.

(Acts 6:1-7)

- One of the deacons, a man named Stephen, is immediately arrested by people who can't withstand the logic of his preaching and get people to bring false charges of blasphemy against Moses against him. This broke a basic commandment found in Exodus 20:16. While they are bringing these charges against Stephen, his faces shines like an angel's. (Acts 6:8-15)

1. What did the lame man want from Peter and John? What does he get in return?
2. What does Peter do after his encounter with the lame man? From whom did he learn that?
3. What names does Peter tell those people who have seen this encounter?
4. What happens to Peter and John after Peter preaches?
5. At least how many people do we know have come to Christ now?
6. When Peter speaks at he and John's trial, why is it important that he is "filled with the Holy Spirit?"
7. What is the cornerstone and why does Peter call Christ that?
8. What plan do the religious leaders come up with and why?
9. How do Peter and John respond to the religious leaders?
10. How old was they man born lame that Peter and John healed?
11. What do the followers of Christ do when they hear what was said to Peter and John?
12. How did the early followers of Christ conduct themselves?
13. What was Barnabas' nickname?
14. What did Barnabas do?
15. Who were Ananias and Sapphira? What happened to them? Why?
16. Why were people hoping that Peter's shadow would cross over them?
17. Who is Gamaliel and what does He say?
18. Why were deacons appointed?
19. What deacon was arrested and why?