



# Acts of the Apostles Teacher's Outline

## MODULE 2/6

### II The Growth of the Church in Jerusalem - Acts 3-7

#### A. The First Apostolic Miracle (3:1-10)

##### 1. Time:

- a. A few weeks/months after Pentecost
- b. 3:00pm
  - i. Hour of worship
  - ii. Apostles attending
    - Church still tied to temple
    - period of transistion
  - iii. Cripple carried to temple gate
    - Popular place for beggars
- c. A divine arrangement

##### 2. The Opportunity:

- a. A lame man
  - i. Long standing affliction (Acts 4:22)
- b. A dependant man
  - i. Living by the mercy of others
- c. A typical man
  - i. We lay helpless/hopeless at God's gate

##### 3. The chosen vessels: Peter and John

- a. Companions in trade (Matt. 4:18, 21)
- b. Inner circle of Christ (Luke 8:51)
- c. Men of prayer
  - i. God can only use those who pray
- d. Poor, yet rich
  - i. No silver or gold
  - ii. Possess greater spiritual treasure
- e. Humble
  - i. Turn attention to God (Matt. 5:16)

##### 4. The Action:

- a. The approach - "look on us"
- b. The clarification - "silver and gold, we have none"
- c. The authority - "In the name of Jesus..."
- d. The miracle was immediate and complete
  - i. Behaviour of the lame man (8)
  - ii. Eye witnesses (4:14)

## 5. The Significance:

- a. This is the work of the church
  - i. Heal the sin sick world
  - ii. Uplift the needy
  - iii. Strengthen the weak
- b. This is the work of the gospel
  - i. Not to seek to improve man's circumstances
  - ii. But to improve the man himself
  - iii. Fulfills Jesus' promise of John 14:12

## B. Peter's Sermon in the Temple (3:11-26)

### 1. He presented Christ (12-18)

- a. People ascribed the miracle to Peter
- b. Jesus is the subject of God's honour (John 12:23)

### 2. Jesus is the object of their humiliation

- a. Severe language:
  - i. Treachery - "whom you delivered up"
  - ii. Denial - "Denied before Pilate"
  - iii. Rejection - "Asked for a murderer"
  - iv. Murder - "Killed the Prince of Life"
- b. Merciful language:
  - i. Killed Jesus in ignorance
  - ii. Fulfilled God's prediction

### 3. Peter proclaimed God's plan of salvation (19-26)

- a. Repent and turn again (19)
  - i. That their sins may be blotted out
  - ii. That seasons of refreshing may come
- b. Harken in all things to Christ (22)
  - i. He is God's prophet (22)
  - ii. He is your brother (Heb 2:17)
  - iii. He is like Moses (John 1:17)
- c. Consequences (23)
  - i. Will be excluded (23)
  - ii. To reject Christ is to reject the prophets (24)
  - iii. To accept will be blessed (25, 26)

## C. The First Jewish Persecution (4:1-31)

### 1. The apostles arrested (1-4)

- a. Time:
  - i. Eventide
  - ii. Too late for a day trial
- b. Agents:
  - i. Priests who left religion to become persecutors
  - ii. Captain of the temple
  - iii. Sadducees

- c. Motives:
  - i. Because they were sore troubled
- d. Consequences:
  - i. Apostles imprisoned
  - ii. People believed

## 2. The apostles in court (5-22)

- a. The court assembled (5, 6)
  - i. Sanhedrin composed of 72 men
  - ii. 23 would constitute a quorum
  - iii. President high priest or acting high priest
  - iv. Members include elders, scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees
- b. The prisoners examined (7)
  - i. Brought in with healed man
  - ii. Only one question asked
    - By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?
  - iii. Objection not on performing the miracle
    - but using the name of the crucified Christ
- c. The prisoner's reply (8-12)
  - i. Miracle was done in Jesus' name
  - ii. Rejected stone was made chief corner stone
  - iii. Salvation is found only in Christ's name
- d. The persecutors' response (13-17)
  - i. They staggered at the boldness of the prisoners
  - ii. They were confounded by their eloquence
  - iii. They want to prevent the spread of this report
  - iv. They forbid the apostles to preach in Jesus' name
- e. The action of the court (18-22)
  - i. They charged the prisoners
  - ii. Then threatened them
  - iii. Lacking courage to inflict punishment
    - they released them

## 3. The apostles in their own company (23-31)

- a. They reported to fellow apostles
- b. They prayed with one accord that
  - i. God would note the threats of the enemies
  - ii. They would have the courage to continue preaching
  - iii. God would continue His work
- c. Their prayer was answered by
  - i. The place was shaken
  - ii. The Spirit descended
  - iii. They were given courage to preach with boldness

## D. The early community of Christians (4:32-37)

- 1. The early church was
  - a. United - of one heart and soul
  - b. Hospitable - the needs of the poor was supplied
  - c. Evangelistic - power to bear witness
  - d. Blessed - great grace was upon them

2. The grace of giving
  - a. The practice
    - i. They sold their land and houses
      - all that they have left
    - ii. All proceeds were placed in a common treasury
      - at the apostles' charge
    - iii. It was distributed according to the need
      - everyone was equally treated
    - iv. The example of Barnabas
      - The son of consolation
  - b. The nature of the practice
    - i. Not compulsory
      - not commanded of every Christian
    - ii. Out of gratitude to God
      - and consideration for less fortunate
    - iii. Local
      - not done anywhere outside Jerusalem
    - iv. Temporary
      - spontaneous response to meet the needs of outstationed Jews attending Pentecost
  - c. Lessons we can glean:
    - i. No such thing as a stingy Christian
    - ii. Our generosity should be freewill
    - iii. Giving blesses the giver

#### E. Ananias and Sapphira (5:1-11)

1. The sin
  - a. A sin of falsehood (3)
    - Giving a part presented as the whole
  - b. A premeditated sin (2)
    - A conspiracy by husband and wife
  - c. A secret sin (2)
    - Agreed together
  - d. A sin against God
    - Tempted the Spirit (3)
2. The origin of the sin
  - a. Satan (John 8:44; 13:2, 27)
  - b. Their hearts
    - i. Pride - to look good to others
    - ii. Greed - to keep back a part
3. The detection of it
  - a. Instantaneous
    - No human witness or tell-tale signs
  - b. Complete
    - Everything was uncovered
  - c. Made public
    - Like sin of Achan (Joshua 7)

4. The punishment of it
  - a. Sudden (Acts 12:23)
  - b. Severe (5, 6, 10)
  - c. Supernatural (9)
  - d. Justified (11)
  
5. Lessons we can glean:
  - a. Deception is a lie without words
    - Ananias did not need to say anything
  - b. Beware of the love of money
    - 1 Timothy 6:10
  - c. Every hidden sin will be revealed
    - Luke 12:2
  - d. God is both severe and good
    - Romans 11:22

#### F. The Second Jewish Persecution (5:12-42)

1. Period of great growth (12-16)
  - a. Many signs and wonders performed by apostles
  - b. The people magnified them
  - c. Multitudes added to the Lord
  - d. Sick, unclean spirit possession were healed
    - i. By under Peter's shadow
    - ii. Everyone was healed - no exceptions
  
2. The apostles imprisoned (17-18)
  - a. The agents: The high priest and Sadducees
  - b. The motive: Filled with jealousy
  
3. The apostles delivered (19-21)
  - a. Charge given by an angel (Psalm 34:7)
    - i. Go ye
    - ii. Stand
    - iii. Speak in the temple
  - b. Apostles obeyed (21)
  
4. Council ready to convene (21-25)
  - a. Called for the apostles to be brought in (21)
  - b. Apostles not in prison (22)
  - c. Apostles delivered out of prison unnoticed (23)
  - d. Council told whereabouts of apostles (25)
  
5. The apostles in Court (26-39)
  - a. The accusations (26-28)
    - i. Disobedience to former charge
    - i. Pinning the guilt of Jesus' death on the council

- b. The defense (29-33)
  - i. We ought to obey God rather than men
  - ii. The gospel story (30-31)
  - iii. We are witnesses (32)
- c. Gamaliel's advice: leave them alone (33-39)
  - i. Example of Theudas (36)
  - ii. Example of Judas (37)

- 6. The apostles released (40-42)
  - a. The punishment
    - i. Beaten
    - ii. Warned
  - b. The result
    - i. Joy that they are counted worthy to suffer
    - ii. Cease not to speak the name of Jesus

## G. The first discord in the church (6:1-7)

- 1. The complaint (1)
  - a. Time: during period of expansion
    - i. Growth always bring problems (the good kind)
    - ii. Apostles were unable to minister to every need
  - b. Source: Grecian Jews
    - i. Jewish desendants
    - ii. Greek culture
    - iii. Example Nonyas
  - c. Against: The Hebrews
    - i. True blue Jews (Philippians 3:5)
    - ii. Includes the apostles
    - iii. Primarily against the leadership
  - d. Cause:
    - i. Racial and cultural differences
    - ii. Favoritism
- 2. The solution (2-6)
  - a. The apostles' decision
    - i. Withdraw from serving tables
    - ii. Focus on prayer and the word
    - iii. Church to do the selection
      - 7 men of honest report
      - Full of the Holy Spirit
      - Wise
  - b. Members chose 7 men
    - i. A mixed group
    - ii. Both local and overseas
  - c. Apostles approved the members' choice (6)
  - d. Work of the church continued to grow (7)

### 3. Lessons we can glean:

- a. There will always be strife in the church
  - wherever humans are gathered together
- b. There will always be oversight
  - even in the best organized effort
- c. Both members and leaders should work for peace
  - Romans 14:19
- d. Ministers and elders should devote to prayer and the word
  - while deacons and other men can serve tables
- e. It is the responsibility of the church to choose its leaders
  - elders and ministers are to give approval
- f. All problems can be solved
  - when leaders and members are willing to work together

### H. Stephen, the first Christian martyr (6:8-15; 7:1-60)

#### 1. Stephen's ministry (6:8-10)

- a. Full of faith, Holy Spirit and power (5,8)
- b. Great wonders and signs (8)
  - i. Until this time only apostles had worked miracles
  - ii. Apostles passed this gift to him (6)
  - iii. Wisdom and irresistible eloquence (10)

#### 2. Stephen's trial (6:11-15)

- a. The arrest (11, 12)
- b. The charge Blasphemy (13,14)
  - i. Against Moses - Jesus change his customs
  - ii. Against God - Jesus would destroy temple - Matthew 26:61
- c. The radiance of his face (15)
- d. The defense (7:1-53)
  - i. Started with story of Abraham (2-8)
  - ii. The sale of Joseph (9-16)
  - iii. The life of Moses (17-38)
  - iv. Israel's apostacy (39-43)
  - v. God cannot be confined to a house (44-50)
  - vi. Application: you slain the Righteous one in envy (51-53)
    - just as you sold Joseph
    - rejected Moses
    - spurned the prophets
- e. Stephen's execution (54-60)
  - i. They were unable to answer Stephen's defence
  - ii. They used violence instead
  - iii. Stephen's final moment
    - last vision was that of heaven
    - last testimony was for Christ
    - last prayer was for his enemies
  - iv. Stephen was the first Christian to die
    - Judas, the first apostle to die took his life
    - Ananias, the first disciple to die, was struck by God
    - Stephen, the first martyr to die, was stoned

v. 3 types of Martyrs

- in deed but not in will eg Stephen
- in will but not in deed eg John
- in will and in deed eg Peter