

Dr. Craig Keener, Acts, Lecture 8, Acts 3-5

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This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Acts. This is session 8 on Acts chapters three through five.

In the introduction, I spent a lot of time talking about historical issues.

In Acts chapters one and two, I got kind of to preaching. So, I like to do all of those things. But in most of the book of Acts, I'm going to try to focus particularly, although not exclusively, on giving you some ancient background that helps you understand the text better.

And the main reason for that is because that's the part you wouldn't get on your own. I'm assuming if you're committed enough to watch this video, you're also committed enough that you already read the book of Acts on your own. But I do want to also commend you because if you've gotten this far in the video, you're a very committed person.

So, Acts chapter three deals with healing in Jesus' name, starting with verses one through 10. It basically gives us an example of what we have in 243, 44, 46, and 47, where silver and gold have been given up their resources, signs, and wonders like 243, 46, and 47 times a prayer together. And what this miracle leads to, as we mentioned earlier, signs often would do this, it leads to a preaching opportunity.

So, looking at some of the background, they find this man at the gate of the temple, or one of the gates of the temple, the Gate Beautiful. Some think that the disabled were barred from the court of Israel. They couldn't go any further than the court of women.

Whether that's true or not, there is some evidence for it. It depends on how rigorous the keepers of the temple were on those things. If it were the people who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls, they would have been barred for sure.

But in any case, this was a profitable place to beg because people were always going by the gate. People were wanting to be pious as they entered the temple. Judaism had a very high work ethic as well as a high charity ethic.

So, it was understood people wouldn't go through the shame in a sense. Well, yeah, it was considered the shame of begging unless they really had to do it. And people tended to be very charitable to those who were begging.

Well, he asks them for money. They don't have money. But what they have, they give him something much more important, something much more valuable than money.

They said, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise and walk. Now, in Jesus' name, what does that mean? There have been various proposals, but the likeliest proposal that catches kind of the best of each is probably as Jesus' authorized agents. They're acting on Jesus' authority.

They're acting for Jesus. Acts 1.1 says that the first volume was about all that Jesus began to do and teach. Now, it could be a Semitism, meaning just all that Jesus was doing and teaching.

But given Luke's uses elsewhere and given its position in Acts 1.1, my suspicion is that probably what it means is Volume 1 was what Jesus began to do and teach. Volume 2 is how Jesus continued to act and teach through the disciples. So it's not so much the Acts of the Apostles, which actually was a later title anyway, but the Acts of Jesus continuing through some of his followers.

In Acts 9, Jesus is acting when Peter wants somebody to be healed. Peter says, Aeneas, Jesus heals you. So there's a recognition that it's Jesus doing the work.

And here, Peter is going to ultimately give credit to Jesus and Jesus' name for healing this man. That's why in chapter 3 and verse 12, when they're saying, the crowds are looking at them, Peter says, why do you look at us as if by our own power or holiness, this man has been made whole? It's by the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom you crucified, that Jesus has made this man whole. If God works through us, let's give him the credit.

If we take the credit for ourselves and look to ourselves, chances are we're not going to keep being able to do those things because it doesn't come from us. It comes from him. Now we're going to look at some notes on Peter's message.

Peter preaches to them the name of Jesus whom you crucified. Speaking of corporate guilt, most of his hearers were not actually there, but Jerusalemite crowds were the ones who cried out for Jesus' execution in Luke chapter 22. So Peter's message, he speaks of how Jesus was crucified, but God has glorified his servant Jesus, chapter 3 and verse 13.

And that language of glorifying the servant echoes Isaiah 52.13 in the Greek translation, where the servant was exalted and lifted up. He was glorified. In the Gospel of John, that's used a number of times with reference to the cross.

Here, it seems to apply especially to the exaltation. And it also, Peter also speaks of Jesus as the holy and righteous one. Well, if he's thinking at all of the context of Isaiah 52:13, in Isaiah 53:11, it speaks of the righteous servant.

He was not condemned for his own sins, even though Israel earlier in Isaiah 40 was receiving double payment for their sins. In chapter 3 and verse 15, Peter speaks of the archehos. The language was often used for heroes, pioneers, and founders of cities.

Jesus is certainly the founder of the movement, but he's also like a pioneer who's cut the way for those who follow him, who's made the way for those who follow him, is the first to rise from the dead. But the term can mean any of those kinds of things. And here, it probably is some sort of combination of those.

That's why you see it translated in so many different ways in different translations. It was used actually in the Septuagint for leaders of clans. So, it's somebody who is a leader and somebody who's making a new way for his followers.

Peter uses the same language in 5:31. It's also used a couple of times in the book of Hebrews 2:10 and 12:2. Here's the irony in 3:14. They accepted a murderer when they said, we want Barabbas, not this man. They accepted a murderer and then they killed the author of life, the founder, the pioneer of life. That's the irony.

And then the further irony, he didn't stay dead. In 3:17, Peter says, I know it was because of ignorance you did this. Well, ignorance doesn't eliminate culpability in ancient law and ancient thought, but it does reduce it.

And so, he's saying, I know you didn't know what you were doing, as Jesus says in the cross in Luke 23, Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing. Also, Peter speaks of how the promised Messianic restoration has come.

Something that was spoken of by all the prophets. Well, in 3.18, the language that's used there, later Jewish teachers said that all the messages of the prophets dealt with this subject or that subject. One of the subjects that they talked about that the prophets dealt with throughout was the Messianic era or Jerusalem's restoration.

And Peter is about to talk with them about this era of restoration. In 3.19, he speaks of the restoration of all things that God had promised. Well, what is the restoration of all things that God had promised? God had promised a new creation, but they also had said in the prophets that repentance would precede this.

Israel's repentance would precede this. That's what Peter is calling for. And there would be a period of restoration when Israel would turn to God.

Hosea 14:1-7, Joel 2:18-3:1, that's an English translation. It's even implied, I think, in Deuteronomy 4:30-31. Jewish teachers recognized that repentance by Israel would precede the restoration. Some thought, well, we can hasten the time of restoration by repenting.

Sometimes later rabbis would say if all of Israel would just all keep the Sabbath together on one day, or if all of Israel would do this or all of Israel would do that. But ultimately, if all of Israel would repent, then God would bring in the time of restoration. Other rabbis said, well, you know, the time is predestined.

We can't hasten it. But still, it could be both. It could be connected with the time of restoration and repentance.

In other words, God had predestined the time of restoration, but he also predestined it in conjunction with Israel's repentance. Whatever the case, here, Peter calls on them to repent and says that the time of restoration will come. Well, what was it that was going to be restored? The time of the restoration of all things.

Some Gentiles talked about the universe of cycles, especially Stoics. They believed that the universe was periodically destroyed by fire and reborn as a new universe. And that only the ultimate deity would remain.

Everything else was going to be dissolved in fire and then be repeated over again. But it wasn't really eternal. It was just being started again.

That's a bit different than what's in view here. Here, Peter's speaking to a Jewish audience. The Jewish expectation of restoration involved the restoration of creation, peace, and prosperity in the earth, Isaiah chapter 11, with the lion and the lamb together.

And also, a new heaven and a new earth, Isaiah 65:17. Also, there would be a new Jerusalem, Isaiah 65, verses 18 and 19, and 66, 8 through 11. But ultimately, probably the primary thought here is related to the way that the term restoration or related term for restoration has already been used in the book of Acts.

In Acts chapter 1 and verse 7, remember the disciples asked Jesus, is this the time that you're going to restore the kingdom of Israel? Well, the disciples still care about that. Naturally, I mean, they're going to be sitting on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel, right? So this is important to them and it's important to the people to whom they're preaching. The restoration of God's people was a central message of the Israelite prophets in the Old Testament.

Well, he's calling them to repent so that those times of refreshing may come that have been promised by the prophets. Even by Acts chapter 28, Israel as a whole is

not turned. Sometimes we think that it looks like, well, none of the Jewish people turned, but that's not true.

Throughout the book of Acts, many of the Jewish people turned, but it wasn't the Jewish people as a whole. Therefore, it wasn't what would bring in this promised time of restoration. We see Paul saying something similar to this in Romans chapter 11.

In fact, Paul believed that his ministry to the Gentiles was actually part of the divine plan because Isaiah had talked about the bringing in of the Gentiles. And when Gentiles turned to Israel's God, well, it's coming through faith in Jesus. Israel should look at that and say, wow, Jesus must be the promised Messiah because look, even the Gentiles are turning to the one true God now.

And Paul believed that by provoking his people to jealousy, to recognize it's through Jesus that these Gentiles are coming in, that his people would turn to faith in the Messiah after the fullness of the Gentiles had come in after enough time had been given so the good news had gone to all the nations, that Israel would see this and the Jewish people would turn to faith in God as a whole. The language of all Israel shall be saved in Romans 11.26 actually is very similar to what you have in Mishnah in Hebron 10.1, where later rabbis talked about how all Israel would be saved and then went on to list exceptions. So, in other words, it means Israel as a whole, the Jewish people as a whole, turning to faith in the Messiah.

It didn't work out the way Paul envisioned, at least not very quickly, because the Gentiles, the Gentile Christians didn't pay attention to what Paul also said to the Gentile Christians in that context. Don't look down on the fallen branches. Don't boast yourself against them as they once boasted themselves against you.

But in fact, through much of history, the Gentile church said, no, we've replaced Israel. And where God is really working now is in the Gentile church. And God doesn't really care about the Jewish people.

And that was not balanced either. And so, in more recent times, however, there's been a turning of many Jewish people to faith in Christ. Some estimate 100,000, some estimate many more than that.

That is still a very small proportion of the Jewish people in the world. It's larger than it's ever been in history since maybe the first, second, or third century. But it was probably a higher percentage in the first century.

So, when we think of the remnant, the issue with the remnant isn't that it has to be very small. The issue with the remnant is that it's not the Jewish people as a whole.

And so, some of the things Paul envisioned and what Peter was hoping for here haven't happened yet.

But Peter was working for it and it's a good thing to work for. Acts' emphasis is on the good news going out to all peoples. But it doesn't mean that the heritage is forsaken or that interest in the Jewish people from whom the message came to begin with is forgotten.

The good news of God's love is for all people. And that love of God is expressed especially in Christ. Well, he says that God had promised that he would raise up a prophet like Moses.

And in this, he's citing Deuteronomy chapter 18 verses 15 and 18. This was a hope that was celebrated not only by the Jewish people. Later rabbis even spoke of a hidden Messiah who would be like Moses, who would be hidden before he was revealed.

But it was something that was also celebrated by the Samaritans. It's also celebrated in the Dead Sea Scrolls. So, this was something that was very emphasized in Peter's day.

There were in fact some people who tried to duplicate the miracles of Moses or Joshua but failed to do so. But people were expecting a new Moses and Jesus who fed the 5,000 in the wilderness. Jesus ultimately was that ultimate prophet.

When I say ultimate prophet, some people say, well, was Jesus the last prophet? And you know, some other religions say, no, we have prophets after that. It's not that Jesus is the last prophet, but he's the ultimate prophet. You know, there were prophets in the Book of Acts, but Jesus is the ultimate prophet.

Him you shall heed, Moses says. In 3:24-26, Peter speaks in verse 24 of prophecies from Samuel onward. The prophets gave prophecies about Jesus' death.

Well, what does that mean? Well, he's just talked about being a prophet like Moses, and Moses was a rejected deliverer. We find out about that more clearly in Acts 7 where that connection seems to be made. Also, we see how the leaders that God raised up normally suffered before they were exalted.

So, there's a pattern there that we see throughout the prophets. And we also have texts about the righteous sufferer of whom the most righteous would be the righteous sufferer par excellence. We also have Isaiah 53 which we've talked about before.

And other passages. So also, the prophets from Samuel onward, Jewish people understood that they prophesied the Messianic era. We don't have a whole lot of texts in the Old Testament that talk about the reigning son of David.

I mean, when I say you don't have a whole lot, it's not as many as you might expect from what Peter says here. If you're looking specifically and exclusively for texts that talk about the reigning son of David. Of those texts about the reigning son of David, the ones that are clear that it's a descendant of David, not David himself.

There's one of those that seems clear that he's divine. And another in Jeremiah 23 that probably implies that at least taken in conjunction with the earlier prophecy in Isaiah. But these prophecies about the new Moses, the one who would suffer and then he would be exalted.

It includes the promise of the Messianic era, the promise of restoration, all the things the Messiah came to do. And so, it's offered first to the people to whom the Messiah first came. He says, you are children or heirs of the prophets, which is rather nice considering how Jesus addressed some of his interlocutors.

And in Luke chapter 11 and verse 47, you know, you're children of those who killed the prophets. And again, in Acts 7.52, how Stephen puts it, that Peter is being very gracious because he's speaking to those who acted in ignorance. And this is corporate guilt and he's offering them a chance to turn.

And many of his heroes do so. He speaks of the blessing of Abraham. Well, this blessing of Abraham that he talks about coming to them, this blessing of Abraham, according to Genesis 12.3, was also to be a blessing to all peoples, a blessing to the nations.

But it was to come through them. And that's why he says that the servant, he's already mentioned back in 3:13, was sent to be a blessing to them first. And of course, first, Luke is implying the Gentile mission that comes afterward.

In Acts chapter 4, they are arraigned by the temple authorities. Well, why are they arraigned by the temple authorities? Because chapter 4 and verse 2 says they are preaching Jesus the resurrection from the dead. The Pharisees talked about resurrection.

They and the Sadducees disagreed vehemently about the resurrection. That may have bothered the Sadducees, but it didn't really threaten them. But the preaching of the resurrection in Jesus was different because it was not merely a theoretical hope for the future.

But it was empirical evidence that that future had already broken into history. The time had come and God was laying his demands on his people. And the leaders of his people who were illegitimate were going to be displaced from their position of power.

The apostles, those who would be sitting on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes, were going to be the new leaders. And the Sadducees obviously were not pleased with that. The Sadducees controlled the temple hierarchy and most of the resident priesthood.

It says that the captain of the temple guard came. The temple guard was a local police force permitted by the Romans made up of Levites. Well, they had come up for the hour of prayer somewhere around three in the afternoon, we would say.

So, sundown would be approaching and that's why they have to put them in, they have to detain them overnight. They can't, the evening is coming and people were supposed to stop working. And they're not going to call a night meeting like they did with the emergency meeting with Jesus.

And the names of these high priests, Annas and Caiaphas, we've already talked about. Annas is the father-in-law of Joseph Caiaphas. Annas had been the high priest.

He still controlled a lot of things behind the scenes. He was succeeded not only by his son-in-law but by five of his sons. So, he was in a position of great power.

Caiaphas was the official high priest from 18 to 36. So, these are people who are accustomed to power. According to all of our other Jewish sources, they were ruthless.

Sometimes they would beat people with clubs. They were disliked in the Dead Sea Scrolls. They were disliked by the Pharisees.

And Josephus reports all sorts of bad things about how some of these high priests were exploiting people. Luke can use the plural for high priests because the aristocratic priesthood in this period, the high priestly families, were all called high priests in the idiom of this period, as opposed to the Rosh Hakohen, the chief priest in the Old Testament. You had the whole, Josephus speaks of a whole high priestly family in this way.

Well, we also see here God's authority rather than the hierarchy's authority. They challenge the hierarchy here. And when they're arraigned for preaching in the temple, and basically because they're challenging the authority of the Sadducees, they're talking about, you know, you crucified this man, you executed this man.

Well, if this man was executed for treason, then it's treason to stick up for him and to challenge those who pronounced judgment on him. But it was considered very rude in the ancient world. It was considered the epitome of ingratitude, which some considered the quintessential sin in Greco-Roman society, to repay a benefaction, to repay a good deed with evil.

You were supposed to repay a benefaction with gratitude, with honor. And the language that Peter uses here, he says, well, if we are called here to give account because of a benefaction given to this man, benefaction was a major issue in the Greco-Roman world. You have inscriptions celebrating it all over the place, where donors would put up buildings or sometimes people were kind of drafted to provide civic support and so on.

If somebody was a benefactor, you were supposed to honor them. Luke chapter 22 talks about that, where the greatest among the Gentiles are the benefactors. Jesus came to suffer and serve, but Jesus also came and functioned as a euergetes, a benefactor, so that it speaks of how Jesus of Nazareth, in Luke-Acts, Jesus of Nazareth went about doing good, Acts 10:38, giving benefaction.

Well, now the disciples are acting in Jesus' name and a benefaction has been done through the name of Jesus to this man. And the disciples are being arraigned for this. Now, this man, he says, if you want to know how this man was made whole, the language for being made whole here is the same Greek word for save.

So that's going to be very significant as Peter goes on, because as they're arraigned, what's demanded of them is, in whose name, by whose authority have you done this? You know, who gave you the right to speak in these temple courts and draw this crowd and challenge our authority? And Peter says, if really what you want to know is, by whose name was this man-made whole? By whose name was this man saved from his sickness? By whose name was this benefaction done? It's by the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom you crucified. In fact, there's no other name given under heaven, which was a good Old Testament idiom, no other name among humanity by which a person may be saved, by which salvation may come, than the name of Jesus of Nazareth. So he moves quickly from the physical healing to salvation, the promised salvation to Israel and to the individuals who would call upon the name of the Lord and be saved, according to Acts 2:21, citing Joel.

This man was saved. Now you can be saved if you call on Jesus' name to be saved. This brings out a point that we have often elsewhere in the New Testament.

Certainly, you have it in John 14:6. There's no other way to the Father except through Jesus. It's not to say nobody has some other truth or some other good things, but humanity's situation is so desperate that it's only through Jesus that we can be fully reconciled to God. Now, this is not just a point that's made only here.

You read the preaching of the gospel throughout the book of Acts. The preaching of the gospel assumes that people need Jesus and it's through Jesus that they can be saved. You have the same thing in Paul's letters and throughout the New Testament.

This idea, is put in different ways. You can be justified by faith. You can be born again, born from above, born of the Spirit, Paul says, as well as John.

You were transferred from the kingdom of the authority of darkness to the kingdom of light. You were moved from death to life. It's put in all sorts of different ways, delivered from cosmic bondage to evil powers.

There are all sorts of different aspects of this deliverance. But in every case, the assumption is that people move from one state to another. People were lost and then they were found.

That doesn't mean everybody knows exactly what had happened. I mean, if you grew up in a Christian home, you know, it may have dawned on you gradually. You may have been accepting it from very early on.

But for somebody like me who didn't grow up in a Christian home and was converted later, it was a very dramatic and drastic change. I can give you the date when it happened and the approximate time in the afternoon when it happened. But the point in any case is that Jesus is the Savior and he's the only Savior.

Now, that was just as offensive in that culture as it is to many people today. It was already offensive in the Greco-Roman world. The Jewish people were considered exclusive and they were very looked down on because they were monotheistic.

Other people like, what's your problem? We worship all the gods, including yours. We don't have a problem with you having a god. Why do you have a problem with our gods? What's wrong with you? You're very rude.

And they looked down on many people, looked down on the Jewish people for that. Some other Gentiles did say, well, you know, they worship the highest god. That's not a bad idea.

But how much more exclusivistic was it to say this God is only followed through Jesus? There was a price that the apostolic church had to pay for this. And if we want to be like them, we're going to have to be willing to pay that price today as well. In cultures that say, well, that's very rude of you to believe that your God is the only way.

We don't have to be personally rude. This is just what we believe. At the same time, in believing this, we need to be gracious.

Remember, Jesus said to the Pharisees, I didn't come for the righteous. Jesus ate with sinners. He reached out to those who were outsiders, who were marginalized, those who knew they were lost, and those who knew their need.

He reached out to them. And we don't reach out to people from a position of superiority like, well, we are saved and you are not, because we were saved wholly by grace. And that's what God offers to do for them as well.

So, when we reach out to people, we reach out to people as those who are broken, and who have been welcomed by God. And we have found something wonderful that we want to share with other people because we care about them. But the temple authorities were not being... The temple authorities were working from a position of power to try to suppress the truth.

And they expected people to line up and shut up when they said to shut up. They normally got their way because they could enforce their way. They had political power.

They weren't expecting Peter and John to speak back to them because they were considered unlearned. That may have meant that they couldn't read. They couldn't write.

At the very least, it means that they didn't have the kind of high-level elite rhetorical training, Greek education and so on that many of the Sadducean priests would have had. But Peter and John answer them boldly. The Greek word there is *parousia*.

And many people in antiquity respected somebody who would speak with the *parousia*, which was a kind of boldness, forthrightness. You weren't flattering people. You were speaking the truth to those in power.

That doesn't mean we go around provoking people. Paul was very respectful to Roman officials and so on. But here were people who claimed to speak for God.

And they were usurping the rightful authority that belonged to the true king of Israel, Jesus the Messiah. And so the disciples spoke very forthrightly. They are sent away with a threat, which was normally considered the right way to do it.

And they go to the other disciples, the other believers, of whom there are quite a large number now. Now, not all of the converts from the day of Pentecost are still there, because remember, some of them are Diaspora Jews probably visiting for the feast. Others are Diaspora Jews who already live in Jerusalem.

But also remember that the number of disciples has been growing through the witness of the church before it comes to this point. So, there are a lot of people together. They could be gathering in the temple.

If it's actually the group as a whole, this could then be a public meeting. But in any case, they go back and they lift their voices in prayer with one voice, with one accord. It doesn't mean that they all simultaneously prayed exactly the same prayer.

This was not a liturgical prayer that everybody knew. This was a spontaneous prayer for the occasion, although people would have known some of the wording from the Psalms of the God who made heaven and earth and the sea, for example, which is also used later in Acts, even preaching to Gentiles who didn't know that that was from Scripture. But as they're going back and they gather the believers for prayer and they lead in this prayer, they say that the nations have gathered together against the Lord and against his anointed.

Psalm 2, which was understood in this period as messianic. It addresses the Davidic line and ultimately the epitome of the Davidic line, the one in whom the restoration would come, who is at this time understood to be the promised Messiah. Messiah, Mashiach in Hebrew, simply means the anointed one.

A lot of people were anointed in the Old Testament, but when Jewish people in this period spoke of the anointed one, they were thinking of the anointed king especially. Dead Sea Scrolls speaks of an anointed king and an anointed priest, but the anointed king was what other Jewish people thought of when they thought of this Messiah, the son of David. So, the son of David, others had gathered against him and so they named the kind of leaders who had gathered against him, Pilate and these chief priests.

But the Lord would put to shame his enemies and so they praise God and they pray that God will continue to grant them boldness, parousia, the same kind of boldness they had before, and that he will continue to stretch forth his hand to heal, that signs and wonders might be done by the name of his holy servant, Jesus. The servant Jesus he's just mentioned, the suffering servant in Acts chapter three, where he preached at length, but we have a summary of that speech. In other words, what had just happened when this man had been healed, and because the man was there in the court of the Sanhedrin, they couldn't really say anything that it hadn't happened because clearly it had.

Everybody knew that this man hadn't been able to walk and now he was able to walk, walking and leaping and praising God, in fact. So, they were asking for more of those things. So, they would have more opportunities for public preaching.

They don't want to be silenced. They want to continue to be bold and continue to speak and trust God to continue to work through them. And so, God answers the prayer and in 431 it says the place was shaken where they were assembled.

They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness. Remember, not exclusively, but especially the Spirit's power and inspiration in Luke-Acts. You can see it already with Zechariah in Luke chapter one, John the Baptist being filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb, and so on.

The Spirit was associated especially with prophecy or with speaking for God. And so they're going to speak the word of God with boldness. They're going to continue to speak for God, to speak his message.

Sometimes it's also associated with other kinds of prophetic actions like miracles and sometimes occasionally with other things, but especially with being able to speak for God. The language of filling seems to be associated with that too. You can think of in Luke chapter four in a negative way when the crowd was filled with anger and acted against Jesus.

But here they have continuing revival. The Spirit is poured out. The place is shaken.

It's very interesting. We don't expect that to happen very often, but it's reported sometimes in some revivals in history. God does some of these things again.

There was a 20th-century revival, a mid-20th-century revival in the Hebrides, mainly a Presbyterian revival. And when the Spirit fell initially, the place was shaken. People felt the houses shaking in more than one location.

But in any case, as the Spirit was poured out, the ensuing revival that's described in verses 32 through 37, it's interesting because this speaks especially of them sharing possessions, giving to those who are in need, selling whatever they had when people were in need. Same thing with Acts 2:44 and 45. So this is radical.

There are some people today who want to speak of the Spirit just in terms of the power the Spirit gives us to get things. But actually, in Acts, the Spirit goes deeper than that. The Spirit transforms us from the inside so that we serve God gladly, so we're devoted to God and to one another.

So, we seek to meet one another's needs. There were a lot of very poor people in Jerusalem, and they wanted to make sure everybody was taken care of. Well, looking at some of these things in more detail, in chapter 4 and verse 4, the number of believers in Jerusalem, as Peter was preaching, came to 5,000 men.

That's not including women and children. It's not Luke's fault that he doesn't have the total number because people back then often just counted by the number of men. So, Luke has to give the only figure that he has.

If Peter and John are, depending on where they're preaching, they might be preaching just in the court of men. But chances are they're preaching beyond that, beyond the court of Israel. They're preaching not necessarily in the outer court, but in the court of women, which is before you get to the court of Israel, and beyond that was the priestly sanctuary.

None of them could have gone unless they were Levites. So probably a lot of women also had become believers, and children had become believers. 5,000 men, let's just say, for the sake of argument, it was like 10,000 people altogether who were believers in Jerusalem.

Now, in most settings in history, actually women have outnumbered men in the church. That seems to have been the case in the first century, following what happened with you had a lot more women converting to Judaism than men. Now that was obvious because circumcision is painful for men and women didn't have to be circumcised.

But even among God-fearers, the women outnumbered the men, partly because in ancient Mediterranean society, the men had social reasons not to convert. They would lose social status in society, whereas it wasn't as much of an issue for the women. That may or may not have been the case in Jerusalem.

But let's just say maybe about 10,000 believers in Jerusalem. People used to say, this wasn't possible because, look, Jerusalem's population was only about 25,000 in this period. But newer estimates based on archaeology have placed the population probably closer to about 85,000.

So, 10,000 is a very sizable number, but it's not like over half the population. What's interesting, though, when we compare it, probably the majority of Pharisees were centered in Jerusalem. And there were only, according to Josephus, never one to underestimate numbers, there were only about 6,000 Pharisees altogether.

There were only about 4,000 Essenes. As far as I can recall, he doesn't number the Sadducees, but my guess is they would not have outnumbered the Pharisees. They would have been fewer and maybe fewer than the Essenes.

So already the number of believers in Jerusalem outnumbers probably the entire number of Sadducees. Some people have said, well, these figures in the book of Acts can't be realistic. And especially when you get to Acts 21:20, where it says that there were myriadoi, tens of thousands of believers in Judea.

That's not limited to Jerusalem, it's in Judea, who are zealous for the law. So, tens of thousands of Judean believers, that means at the minimum 20,000 and maybe more than that. Some people have said that's not possible because they calculate, well, you know if the growth was steady up until the time of Constantine, you couldn't have started with this many people already in Jerusalem who were believers.

But who says that the growth was steady? If you look at various revival movements in history, often in the initial revival, there's a massive spread. For example, in the United States, there was a revival here, the Second Great Awakening, that the Methodist church in the United States very much profited from. During that movement, from the time that Francis Asbury arrived here, there were already some Methodists, but from the time that he arrived here from England and began preaching to the time of his death, the Methodist church grew about 1,000 times over.

Baptists grew hundreds of times over in roughly the same period. And you look at some of the revivals in some other places, the Nias revival in Indonesia, the huge growth of the church in that period. I believe that was over 100 times over.

You look at the Pentecostal revival in the early 20th century, starting from 1906. Now, there were other people who were, you know, well, even some who prayed in tongues, but there were other people who were Pentecostal-like before that, and a lot of people came into this movement from other movements, the Holiness movement, and so on. But starting from 1906, where the movement really took off, we could say, really spread very quickly, to 2006, there are estimates, well, these estimates don't include just denominational Pentecostals.

They also include those who are identified as charismatic, and there are reasons to, well, there are reasons why people are giving different estimates. But we may be talking about half a billion people in one century, or if it's just classical denominational Pentecostals, at least a couple hundred million people. Now, that's phenomenal growth.

Revival movements often begin with a spurt of massive growth, and there's no reason, therefore, to doubt these kinds of figures that we have in the Book of Acts when you compare sociological parallels today. In any case, in chapter 4 and verse 6, Annas is called the high priest, even though officially Caiaphas was at the time, both are named as high priests in Luke chapter 4. In chapter 3 and verse 2, because again, the high priest could be used in the plural in this period. But they were both members of the high priestly family.

They both exerted a lot of power, and other sources viewed them negatively. I talked about this issue of playing on the Greek word for salvation, *sodzo* and *soteria*, the

noun cognate. Peter also quotes here in chapter 4 and verse 11, Psalm 118, verse 22, that Jesus had also cited back in Luke chapter 20 and verse 17.

The real cornerstone on which the real temple of God is going to be built is not the temple establishment, but it's the stone that the builders themselves rejected, Jesus of Nazareth. Interestingly, even the place where he was rejected, the site of his crucifixion was built near a stone quarry. So, there were a lot of rejected stones there literally as well.

In terms of God's authority rather than the hierarchy, when they speak with boldness to their challengers, philosophers often stressed obeying God rather than people. Socrates was known for that. And so actually some of the language that's used when Peter says something like that again in Chapter 5 is fairly close to Socrates.

But it doesn't mean that Peter and John would have had to have known that. Although the Sadducees, having more access to Greek education, probably would have recognized an illusion that Peter didn't intend. But also, this kind of boldness is modeled by the Old Testament prophets.

Nathan, you are the man, O king. Or Elijah, who confronts Ahab and thereby Jezebel. Or Jeremiah, they confronted kings.

They confronted authorities. Uriah did that and he suffered martyrdom, Jeremiah Chapter 26. Praising God in the face of persecution.

Remember what Jesus said in Luke chapter 6, Luke's first volume. Rejoice, leap for joy when they persecute you when they call you false prophets because it's the same way that their ancestors treated the prophets who were before you. Paul rejoices in the same way.

Paul and Silas, when they're beaten in Acts chapter 16 and verse 25, they're praising God at midnight like Psalm 119 talks about. They're praising God at midnight and the other prisoners are listening to them. And as they're praising God, what happens? Well, here in Chapter 4, the place is shaken where they're assembled.

There in chapter 16, verse 26, the place is shaken too. They have a literal earthquake and their bonds are loosed. In 4:24, they may be echoing Psalm 146, verse 6. God who made heaven, earth, the sea, and all that's in them.

Verses 25 and 26, as we mentioned, echo Psalm 2, verses 1 and 2, where the anointed applies to the Messiah. And in verse 28, God, you determined this in advance. Just as in the Old Testament, God can even use the wicked to execute his own plan.

The cross was his plan. The rulers meant it for evil, but God meant it for good, to use language for Joseph. Or you think of how in Isaiah Chapter 10, Assyria was the rod of God's anger to discipline the northern kingdom of Israel.

But when God was done using them because of their arrogance, thinking they were doing it on their own, God was going to judge them too. God can use even the wicked as part of his plan to achieve his purposes, even though that's not their intention. God has his... You look at the sovereignty of God, and there are different ways of looking at it.

My way of understanding it is that God is so sovereign that he's able to accomplish his will even by allowing people a measure of free choice so that people have responsibility for what they do within the sphere. But God still accomplishes those ultimate purposes. He foreknows what they're going to do and works things together.

That's how sovereign and mighty God is. At one point, I just worked through the entire Bible taking notes on this theme, and I was just astonished at especially the emphasis on God's sovereignty because that's the part we need to be confronted with the most because that's the part we, you know, living our ordinary daily lives don't take into account. But not a hair from our head falls apart from God's will.

People may do evil to us, but ultimately God's purposes will prevail for his church and eternally for each of us. Prayer for boldness. Some people in the Old Testament, when they were persecuted, they prayed for vengeance.

2 Chronicles 24, Psalm 137, and Jeremiah 15. But here the prayer is for boldness and for signs, just as in verse 9 God had granted boldness. Remember, in Luke 11:13, Jesus promised that God would give the Holy Spirit to those who ask.

Well, here they ask. Here it comes. The Holy Spirit gives boldness.

And in verse 33, it says the apostles continue to give witness with power. Presumably, given the way that language is used, it means signs continue to take place. And then in the rest of this chapter, we have contrasting examples.

We have Joseph Barnabas, who sold a field. That doesn't mean, you know, people gave up their sandals and their cloaks and things like that necessarily. But he sold a field and gave the money to the apostles.

The apostles had oversight over the gifts to the poor. It just is more efficient if you have somebody giving oversight. So, people were contributing to this work.

They knew that the apostles were trustworthy, people of integrity, people following Jesus' teaching and living according to Jesus' teaching. So, Jesus had taught a lot about caring for the poor. So, the leaders are able to distribute the money.

That's going to become an issue in Chapter 6 when they get to the point where they can't do it well enough and they have to delegate. But in any case, Joseph is a good example here. Joseph is called by them Barnabas.

Nicknames were common. Joseph was a common name. You needed another name to go with it to specify which Joseph this is.

So, it's not Joseph Barsabas, for example, who probably was born on the Sabbath. That's why he's called Barsabas, son of the Sabbath. But here we have Joseph Barnabas.

And he's a Levite from Cyprus. There was a significant Jewish community in Cyprus. And in Chapter 11 and verse 20, we're going to read that Cypriot and Cyrenian Jews began to spread the message to Gentiles.

Well, you know, they had been scouted from Jerusalem. Barnabas may well have been one of them who was first spreading this message to Gentiles, even though Luke is going to focus more on Paul, probably because Paul is his main source as well. But also, that Joseph Barnabas was a person of means, we can gather from something that Luke doesn't tell us.

Because Mark was his cousin or his relative, we read in Colossians chapter 4. So, when we read about John Mark's mother's house in Acts chapter 12, verses 12 and 13, she has a servant. She has an outer gate. Probably that means she lives in the upper city.

She has a fairly well-to-do home. So, Joseph is a diaspora Jew. Originally, he's from the diaspora, but he's one who has means and is settled in Jerusalem.

But this is contrasted with another example. In 4:36 and 37, the positive example is Joseph Barnabas. But in 5:1 through 11, we have a negative example.

And that example is the example of Ananias and Sapphira. We don't know much extra biblically about them, but we do know that Sapphira was a name that meant beautiful. It was especially common among the priestly elite.

So, men normally didn't marry above them socially in terms of wealth. Sometimes they did, but not usually. So probably they were fairly well-to-do.

Chapter 5 verses 1 through 11 gives us a negative example of people who said they were completely committed, who said they were part of this revival, but it was only on the surface. It was only for pretend. In times of revival, when people are devoting themselves to God, you don't want to fake it.

You want to be part of the real thing. So, the apostles have to address sin in the camp, and here we have an issue of judgment. And some of the language here in Greek echoes the Greek translation of Joshua chapter 7, where we read about Achan from the tribe of Judah, who had kept some of the spoils of Jericho for himself.

They weren't to be kept for oneself. These were holy things set apart for herem. They were devoted to destruction.

They were to be destroyed because they were so contaminated with the sin of Jericho. And by keeping this for himself, he brought judgment on the entire community. Sometimes we don't take sin very seriously today.

For example, in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, it's around verse 30. Paul says, this is why there are many weak and sick among you, and some have died, because they weren't rightly discerning the body of Christ. And that seems to have inhibited the free flowing of gifts of healings among them.

And Paul, you know, that's not the only reason that people can get sick and die. But the community had sin in its midst. Sometimes passages in the Old Testament talk about rooting that out, rooting that sin out.

1 Corinthians 5 uses language from Deuteronomy for executing a sinner, to root out evil from the midst of the community. For the church doesn't execute people, obviously, but for putting somebody out of the church who is committing a very public and known sin. In this case, in the midst of this revival, it was even a private sin.

Well, it was public, but it wasn't known to be a sin. The action was public, but people didn't know. But we don't always take sin seriously today.

And we want God's blessing on the community. Acts 5, verses 1 through 4, the Dead Sea Scrolls, in the Dead Sea Scrolls, they required members to turn over their possessions after a trial period. The Pythagoreans, which is a Greek philosophic sect, also required members to turn over their possessions after a period of testing to make sure they really wanted to join the community.

The early Christians, however, didn't have a rule. That's why Peter says to them, wasn't this your own? You did this voluntarily. So, the early Christians didn't have a rule.

You have to give all your money to us. You have to give your possessions to us. It was because of love.

And judgment is more serious here, not because of what they didn't give, but because of their pretense of commitment. Hypocrites didn't look very good in the Gospel of Luke. And it doesn't matter whether the hypocrite belongs to the sect of the Pharisees or whether the hypocrite claims to be a Christian.

God does not like hypocrites. It hurts the spreading of the Gospel. Well, the Dead Sea Scrolls excluded such an offender from the communal meal for a year.

And eventually, if they were caught a second time, they'd be excluded permanently from the community. Normally, that might be what the church would have done. But in this case, they're struck dead.

Just like the two sons of Aaron who played with holy fire, and the fire came out and struck them dead. Sometimes God enacts judgment when people are treating as profane what is holy. A revival is holy when God is pouring out the Spirit.

And we don't want to fake it. We want to submit to the work of the Spirit during those times. And we thank God for that.

But there's also a price to revival, too. And holiness is something that is important in times of revival. We also see that miracles increase.

They had prayed for boldness. They prayed that God would continue to heal. And that happens.

People are afraid to join the community lightly after this. It doesn't mean that people were afraid to become believers. But they were afraid to become believers and join the church after they heard what happened to Ananias and Sapphira if they weren't really going to commit themselves to Christ.

This, it says, brought fear upon the people. The same as when somebody was executed in the Old Testament. The purpose of it was to make people afraid to commit this sin again.

Now, miracles increase beyond this act of judgment. Most of the miracles are healings. People bring the sick into the streets so that as Peter is passing by, maybe on his way to prayer in the temple, even his shadow might touch them.

People thought that the shadow was attached to the person. That's why many Jewish people thought if your shadow touches a corpse or your shadow touches a tomb, you become unclean. And so, this is what people were thinking.

But the power of the Spirit was so strong through Peter that people were being touched through this. Remember in 2 Kings 13, I believe it is, where Elisha was sick of a sickness with which he died. And yet he was so full of the power of God that when they threw a corpse in on top of his bones, the corpse came back to life.

Remember Jesus in Luke chapter 8, a woman reaches out and touches his clothing. And he says, I felt the power go out from me. In Acts chapter 19, clothes are taken from Paul, and people are miraculously healed through those clothes and demons are cast out that way.

We don't see this happening all the time. Often it's, you know, them saying like Paul perceived that somebody has faith to be healed and says in the name of Jesus be healed and so on. But sometimes the Spirit of God was being poured out so dramatically that we have it even on this level of intensity.

Now, the problem that this brought is that when you have miracles, a lot of people are more likely to pay attention. That's great. That means a lot of people will turn to God.

But it also means the people who aren't going to turn to God can't ignore you either. And so, in the next lesson, we're going to see that they get in trouble with the Sadducees again.

This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Acts. This is session 8 on Acts chapters three through five.