

## **Dr. Robert A. Peterson, The Theology of Luke-Acts**

### **Session 14, Peterson, The Church in Acts, Part 1**

This is Dr. Robert A. Peterson in his teaching on The Theology of Luke-Acts. This is session 14, Peterson, The Church in Acts, Part 1.

We continue our lectures on Luke and theology, continuing to study the Acts of the Apostles.

Let us seek the Lord. Dear Father, thank you for your word. Thank you for the record of the spread of the gospel in the early church in Acts. Bless us and work in our minds and hearts, we pray, through Jesus Christ, the mediator. Amen.

We've seen F. F. Bruce's introduction to the book of Acts in his new international commentary on the New Testament and then a solid introduction with many important themes and ideas in Dennis Johnson's The Message of Acts.

We're now going to look at my own The Church in Acts. Overview. Well, let me read a little bit before the overview.

Luke wrote one grand story in two books, his gospel, and Acts. This is true for a number of reasons, but three stand out. First, as we've seen numerous times already, the prologues to Luke and Acts indicate Luke's intention in writing.

We agree with Howard Marshall that the gospel's prologue "is probably meant to refer to both parts of the two-volume work. Luke," *Historian and Theologian*, page 40. In addition, the prologue to Acts refers to the gospel of Luke as, "the first narrative."

Acts 1:1 to 3. Let me get it from the ESV. "In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God."

Second, Luke-Acts are tied together because the gospel ends, and Acts begins with references to Jesus' ascension. The prologue to Acts in the prologue to Acts, Luke reminds readers that his gospel was a quote about all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up. This hearkens back to the end of the gospel, where Luke writes that Jesus left them and was carried into heaven, Luke 24:51.

Third, the third reason why Luke, Acts, is really one unit. The beginning of Acts fulfills Jesus' prophecy at the end of Luke's gospel, where after telling the disciples they are

his witnesses, he announced, and look, I'm sending you what my Father promised. As for you, stay in the city until you are empowered from on high, Luke 24:49.

Acts is all about the witness of the Spirit-empowered apostles to the risen Christ. So, Luke, Acts should be studied in two ways. Individually, Gospel Luke, Book of Acts, but also together as two parts of one work, Luke hyphen Acts.

Outline of the church in Acts. The Holy Spirit equips the apostles for witness, Acts 1. The message of the early church, Acts 2:32 through 41. Activities of the early church, Acts 2:42 to 47.

Servants of the early church, Acts 6, 1 through 7. God saves Gentiles, Acts 10:34 through 48 as we've already seen, a tremendous and very important transition, not only in the book of Acts, but in the story of the whole Bible.

Number six, Acts 13. God sovereignly works among Gentiles amidst persecution, Acts 13:44 through 52.

Number seven, grace and unity in the church, Acts 15:6 to 11. The Jerusalem Council.

Passage number eight, Paul's example of church ministry, Acts 2: 18 through 32. And finally, Paul in prison, but the gospel is not bound, Acts 28, 23 through 31. Number one, the Holy Spirit equips the apostles for witness, Acts 1, 4 through 11.

While staying with them, Jesus ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem but to wait for the promise of the Father, which he said, you heard from me, for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. So when they came together, they asked him, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? He said to them, it is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority, but you'll receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you'll be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

And while they were gazing into heaven, as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes and said, men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus who has taken up from you into heaven will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven. The very beginning of Acts reminds readers of Jesus' instructions to the disciples at the end of Luke's gospel to remain in Jerusalem until he sends the Father's promise. Acts 1:4. Reflecting the very same language, Luke 24:49. The ESV translates, the promise of the Father.

To remain in Jerusalem until he sends the Father's promise, the Holy Spirit, to them in newness and power. Luke 24:49. Moreover, Jesus connects the beginning of Luke with Acts 1 and 2 when he says, quote, for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days. Acts 1:5. John the Baptist's prediction that the Messiah would baptize the church with the Holy Spirit occurs in all four gospels, which is unusual.

It occurs in all four gospels, it's repeated in Acts 1, and then in Acts 2, Jesus fulfills the prediction by pouring out the Holy Spirit on the church. In that way, especially, again, there's a connection between Luke and Acts. Early on, Luke has John the Baptist making that statement in Luke 3:16. So, Luke 3:16. John the Baptist's prediction that the Messiah would baptize the church with the Spirit.

Luke 24. A reminder of the promise of the Father's promise and the Holy Spirit coming to Jerusalem. Acts 1. Jesus rehearses John's prophecy.

There's thus a linkage between the beginning and end of Luke and the end of Luke and the beginning of Acts. These things are tethered in this way. Jesus repeats John's prophecy in Acts 1 and fulfills it in Acts 2. That is, the gospels demand the book of Acts, especially Luke.

They are incomplete. Incomplete? They speak of the death and resurrection of Jesus, which is part of the definition of a gospel. It has to have some of Jesus' teachings and life, but what is essential is his death and resurrection.

How could they be incomplete? They're incomplete in that all four of them predict the Messiah is baptizing a church with the Holy Spirit, and he does not do that in any gospel. I'm not criticizing the gospels when I say they demand the book of Acts to fulfill John's prophecy. And we find that thing that is repeated in Acts 1. How could we miss it? And then accomplished in Acts 2. This fulfillment itself is a witness to the Jewish pilgrims who traveled to Jerusalem for Pentecost.

For when the Spirit filled the apostles, they spoke in different languages, astounding the hearers. For each heard God's great acts in their native languages. Acts 1:4 through 12.

Peter explained that what they heard was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. That God would pour out his Spirit on all people in the last days. Acts 1:17, citing Joel 2:28 through 32.

Joel 2:28 to 32. And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.

Your old men shall dream dreams. And your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days, I will pour out my Spirit.

And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth. Blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, the moon to blood.

Before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said.

And among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls. The sermon of Peter that followed brought many to the Lord, as we will see in our next passage. The eleven asked Jesus if he would restore the kingdom to Israel then.

He mildly rebuked them and reset their focus by indicating that they were not to be concerned about the dates when prophecies would be fulfilled. For that was the Father's business. Acts 1:6 and 7. Instead, they were to focus on the task of world evangelism.

Acts 1:8. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Verse 8. They did not immediately understand that Jesus' words implied witnessing to Gentiles, but would rather understand them, to refer to witness to Jews of the dispersion.

It is difficult to overemphasize the importance of Acts 1:8. William Larkin correctly labels it a command and a promise, for it is both at once. It ties together the Spirit's power and evangelism. It also provides a geographical outline of the progress of the gospel and thus outlines the book of Acts.

David Peterson explains in his *The Acts of the Apostle Pilgrim New Testament Commentary*. "Jesus echoes the words and concepts of Isaiah 49:6." within a quote, the promise of God's reign is not simply the restoration of the preserved of Israel, but the renewal of the vocation of Israel to be a light to the nations, to the ends of the earth. Peterson cites Tideh, the exaltation of Jesus and the restoration of Israel in Acts 1. *Harvard Theological Review* 79, page 286.

Acts 1:8 is a prediction and a promise of the way this divine plan will be fulfilled rather than a command. The rest of the book shows how it happened. First in Jerusalem, chapters 2-7.

Then in all Judea and Samaria, chapters 8-12. And then to the ends of the earth, chapters 13-28. As the disciples watched, Jesus ascended in a cloud out of their sight, and they continued watching.

They were interrupted by two angels in radiant garb who asked why they kept looking at the sky. Sometimes, the Bible is humorous. Acts 1:9-11.

They shared that the same Jesus who has been taken from you into heaven will come in the same way that you have seen him go into heaven. In verse 11, the angels reminded the disciples that Jesus would return. The implication was that the disciples needed to stop gazing heavenward and need to get busy with the great commission.

The New Testament people of God, then, are those whom he equips and commissions for mission. The Holy Spirit will empower them to share the good news with a lost world. God's people are also those who long for the second coming of Christ.

They are thus a missional and eschatological people. Bach highlights these insights while discussing the ultimate goal of Acts 1:8 for the church. Quote, the phrase end of the earth then is geographic and ethnic in scope, inclusive of all people and locales.

The church's call is to be missionary in direction and eschatological in focus. Close quote, Darrell Bach, Acts, Baker's exegetical commentary on the New Testament pages 65 and 66. Our second passage in Acts dealing with the people of God in the New Testament is the message of the early church in Acts 2:32-41.

All along, Peter has been the leader. Oh, he said some foolish things. He'll never go to the cross, he says.

And Jesus says, get behind me, Satan. Yikes. And then he disowns his Lord three times, denying him.

Before little servant girls, which is just astonishing to me. Although I guess I should look in the mirror. So, God breaks him, and Jesus restores him in John 21.

As Peter wants a private audience with Jesus, jumping out of the boat, getting into Jesus' presence. Jesus brings him through a hard repentance, making him affirm his love for Jesus three times, kind of breaking his heart. But Peter all along has been a great leader, but now endowed with the Spirit in a new and powerful way.

He is fearless and he is greatly used of God in the early church. Acts 2:32-41 includes at least part of the sermon, as all the sermons in Acts, a summary in Luke's own words. Brothers, verse 29, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, he would set one of his descendants on his throne, 2 Samuel 7. He foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus, verse 32, God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses. This is kind of a definition of what an apostle is.

Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. For David himself did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool. Let all the house of Israel, therefore, know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.

Now, when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brothers, what shall we do? Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself. And with many other words, he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation.

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. People became and become the New Testament people of God by believing the apostles' message about Jesus. We see this already on the day of Pentecost, as Peter preaches Christ, and three thousand people believe.

What was the message of the early church? After God poured out the Holy Spirit on the apostles, Peter explained this phenomenon by quoting Joel 2, 28-32. The end of this quotation formed a good bridge to Peter's sermon. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved, Acts 2: 21, citing Joel 2:32.

As is common in the New Testament, Peter interprets the Lord of the Old Testament quotation as the Lord Jesus. The New Testament message is one of salvation in Jesus' name. Jesus is the center of the early church's message, as Peter's very next words attest.

Fellow Israelites, listen to these words. This Jesus of Nazareth was a man attested to you by God with miracles, wonders, and signs that God did among you through him, just as you yourselves know. Acts 2:22.

Peter appeals to his hearer's acquaintance with Jesus' earthly ministry, witnessed by God working miracles through him. The apostle then immediately goes to the heart of the matter, testifying to Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection in verses 23 and 24.

Peter elaborates on the reality of Jesus' resurrection, presenting it as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy in Psalm 16, Acts 2:25-32.

Peter accentuates the fact that the apostles, in fulfillment of Acts 1:8, are witnesses of Jesus' resurrection. God has raised this Jesus, I'm quoting, we're all witnesses of this, close quote, verse 32. Having testified to Jesus' death and resurrection, Peter continues to speak of his exaltation.

That, along with his resurrection, includes his ascension, session, and pouring out the Spirit at Pentecost, verse 33. He backs this up from Scripture too, citing David's words in Psalm 110:1. The Lord declared to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool. Acts 2:34-35.

Next, Peter applies his message about Jesus. Therefore, let all the house of Israel know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ, verse 36. In his Pentecost sermon, Peter lays down a pattern that he repeats in his sermons in Acts.

In the same sentence, he includes the Jews' estimation of Jesus, as evidenced by their supporting his crucifixion, with which he contrasts God's estimation of Jesus, as evidenced by his raising him from the dead. This pattern first appears at the very beginning of Peter's sermon, following his quotation of Joel 2:28-32. "this Jesus you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up." Acts 2:23-24. Powerfully, Peter repeats this pattern in verse 36.

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah." This is the punchline to Peter's Pentecost sermon.

His hearers were complicit in Jesus' crucifixion, but God the Father raised him, publicly declaring him both Lord and Messiah. As the Holy Spirit works in fulfillment of Acts 1:8, the apostles' words have an immediate and crushing effect on his hearers. Their hearts were pierced, and they asked the apostles, brothers, what should we do? Verse 37.

Peter wastes no time in responding. Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Verse 38.

Acknowledging that they played a part in the murder of their Messiah, Peter's hearers might regard themselves as beyond forgiveness. Thankfully, the apostles did not so regard them, as Peter's comforting reply indicates. That would be Peter's comforting reply indicates.

F.F. Bruce explains, quote, the reply was unspeakably reassuring. Incredible as it might appear, Peter told them that there was hope even now. Let them repent of their sin and turn to God.

Let them submit to baptism in the name of Jesus, confessed as Messiah. Then not only would they receive forgiveness of sins, they would receive also the gift of the Holy Spirit. The gift which had been bestowed on the apostles themselves only a few hours before.

F.F. Bruce, Book of Acts, New International Commentary on the New Testament, page 75. This verse has raised questions, which we will briefly address. First, repentance without faith is mentioned as the proper response to the offer of salvation.

Rarely both are mentioned together. See Acts 19:2 and 20:21 for examples of the combination of faith, repentance and faith. Acts 19:2, 20:21. And usually either repentance, Acts 5:31, Acts 11:18, or faith, Acts 15:9, 26:18 is mentioned implying the other.

One more time. Rarely both are mentioned together. Usually either repentance or faith is mentioned implying the other.

Together, Acts 19:4, 20:21. Repentance alone, 5:31, 11:18. Faith alone, 15:9, 26:18. This means Peter's only mentioning repentance here is not a problem. Salvation involves turning from sin, repentance, and turning to Christ as he is offered in the Gospel, faith. It is best to regard repentance and faith as two sides of one coin.

Second, based on Peter's words, repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins. Some have taught baptismal regeneration, either of infants or adults. Although such an inclusion is possible based on this text, it is contradicted by the rest of the New Testament, including the rest of the Book of Acts. David Peterson is correct when he writes concerning baptism.

“It is not a right that can secure the blessings of salvation apart from genuine repentance and faith.” Peterson, Acts of the Apostles 155.

His commentary is a very good choice for educated laypersons. It is based upon lots of study, but it is presented in clear and understandable language with footnotes that take you further if you really want to go there. Third, as previously mentioned, Peter's words, the promise is for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call.

Those words foresee the gospel going to the Gentiles, though the apostles probably understood it as referring to Jews dispersed throughout the empire. God would



correct their understanding by sending Peter to Cornelius and by calling Paul to salvation as the apostle to the Gentiles. Fourth, contrary to the order at Pentecost, here God gives the Holy Spirit as a gift after people believe.

Verse 38. David Peterson puts this matter of the gift of the Spirit in the Book of Acts in perspective. Quote, the gift of the Spirit sometimes precedes and sometimes follows water baptism in other contexts.

Compare 8:11, 8:14-17, 9:17-18, 10:44-48, 19:5-6. One more time. The gift of the Spirit sometimes comes before and sometimes follows water baptism.

8:11, 8:12, sorry, and 14:17, 9:17-18, 10:44-48, 19:5-6. Astonishingly, the Holy Spirit worked through Peter's strong message with its warning, quote, be saved from this corrupt generation, verse 40. And as a result, that day about 3,000 people were added to them, verse 41.

This is Luke's first notation of the early church's great growth. He gives more of those, as we already saw. This passage has much to teach us concerning the identity of the New Testament people of God.

They are described as those who repent and believe, as assumed when they hear the apostles' message about Jesus. They believe that Jesus was crucified and that God raised him on the third day in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and in proof that he is the Lord and promised Messiah. Jesus is Lord who saves sinners, Acts 5:31.

God exalted this man to his right hand as leader and savior to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins, 5:31. As a result, God's people enjoy the forgiveness of sins through Jesus, and they submit to Christian baptism. God gives his New Testament people the Holy Spirit to regenerate and indwell them.

God teaches them much more about the Spirit than he did in the Old Testament. In addition, the people of God have received the Spirit to empower their evangelism. Although apostles take the lead in Acts, surely Larkin is right, quote, that the whole church and each member must take up this task.

All who receive the apostles' teaching become witnesses. Bill Larkin, Acts, page 41. The examples of every member being a witness are in Acts 14:2 and 3:22, 15 to 18, and verse 20 as well.

14:2 and 3, chapter 22:15 through 18 and 20. Third passage describing the people of God in the book of Acts is activities of the early church in Acts 2:42 through 47. Luke provides insight into some vital activities of the early church in Acts 2:42.

They applied themselves, I'm going to get it from the ESV, and they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. These are things in which the early church participated. Notice that the activities were done in common.

The believers shared in each other's lives. Individual initiative was involved, of course, but togetherness stands out as a characteristic of the early church. Each of them enjoyed a personal relationship with Christ, and they enjoyed this together.

They shared Christ by giving themselves over to the apostles' doctrine, to sharing their lives in Christ, to common meals, including the Lord's Supper, and to praying for one another. We will examine each of these four activities in turn. First, the early believers committed themselves to imbibing the apostles' doctrine.

As we saw in our treatment of the last passage, Peter's Pentecost sermon was laced with Old Testament scripture from Joel 2, Psalm 16, and Psalm 110. But notice that at the same time, Peter's words in the sermon, when not quoting scripture, were also received by the hearers as the word of God. His sermon words were authoritative, teaching God's truth and exhorting his hearers concerning how to get right with God.

Both scripture and Peter's words, delivered as an apostle, were authoritative for theology and ethics. They were divine revelation in human words, as much as the written word of God is. And, of course, all the prophetic messages in the Old and New Testaments did not become part of the written word of God.

We would say the written word is most important. But the other prophetic proclamations were equally revelatory. God gave us what he wanted us to have in his inscripturated prophetic and apostolic words.

Both scripture and Peter's words, delivered as an apostle, were authoritative for theology and ethics. Does that mean everything Peter ever said was that way? No. When Mrs. Peter told Peter to put the garbage out there, whatever his response might have been, it wasn't revelation from God.

It is when they spoke for God as apostles that their words were a revelation from God. As exalted as that sounds, it is true. The believing Jews accepted Peter's apostolic sermon as the very word of God.

They repented and were baptized. Second, the first Christians dedicated themselves to fellowship, to sharing their lives in Christ. The New Testament idea of fellowship, the Greek word *koinonia*, carries more weight than we usually ascribe to our idea of fellowship today, coffee and donuts in the church basement.

Consider these texts. God is faithful. You are called by him into fellowship with his son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

1 Corinthians 1:9. Do not be yoked together with those who do not believe. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness? 2 Corinthians 6:14. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. 2 Corinthians 13:13, the famous benediction.

If then there's any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, Philippians 2:1. And then 1 John 1, verses 3 and 5 through 7. What we have seen and heard, we also declare to you, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And indeed, our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. God is light.

And there's absolutely no darkness in him. If we say we have fellowship with him and yet walk in darkness, we are lying and not practicing the truth. If we walk in the light, as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

1 John 1:3, 5, and 7. In these New Testament texts, fellowship is a way of talking about God's salvation shared with believers so that they have a partnership with the Father, 1 John 1:3, with the Son. 1 Corinthians 1:9. 1 John 1:3, and the Holy Spirit. 2 Corinthians 13:13.

Philippians 2:1. These texts talk about salvation, that Christians may have a partnership with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And that's it. 1 John 1 is particularly instructive because it combines believers' fellowship with God, Father, and Son, and believers' fellowship with other believers, with one another.

This brings us back to Acts 2:32. The fellowship that believers share is, first of all, God's sharing salvation with us so that we partner with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Derivative from this fellowship with the divine, we also have fellowship with one another. Acts 2:32. Compare Galatians 2:9. So, the early believers shared with one another God's partnership with them in salvation.

They shared the things of Christ, eternal life, and the forgiveness of sins. Theirs was a rich and fulfilling fellowship indeed. It is not surprising that this also sometimes led to a voluntary sharing of possessions, as the verses following Acts 2:42 demonstrate.

Third, the believers shared in the breaking of bread. Luke refers to the breaking of bread three times in his writings. Luke 24:35. Then they began to describe what had happened on the road to Emmaus, the meaning, and how he had made himself, Jesus, known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Acts 24:35. Acts 2:42. They applied themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. Acts 2:42. Acts 20 and verse 7. On the first day of the week, we assembled to break bread. Paul spoke to them, and since he was about to depart the next day, he kept on talking until midnight.

Acts 20 and verse 7. Long-winded preacher. There is disagreement as to what this entails. David Peterson denies that, "the breaking of the bread" refers to the Lord's Supper, and instead holds that Acts 2:42, "most obviously refers to the common meals shared by the earliest disciples in their homes, verse 46." Peterson's commentary on Acts page 161. This is an accurate interpretation of the fact that the disciples, quote, broke bread from house to house in verse 46.

But is it the correct interpretation of verse 32, and especially of 20 and verse 7? I note in passing that Luke 24:35 also refers to a shared meal. I don't see the Lord's Supper there in Luke 24, in the saying about the road. Didn't our hearts burn when he broke bread? That's not the Lord's Supper.

That is a meal that Jesus shared with the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Other New Testament scholars see a probable reference to the Holy Spirit in 2:32, and a definite one in 27. Bruce wrote concerning 4:34.32, quote, the breaking of the bread here denotes something more than the ordinary partaking of food together.

The regular observance of a Lord's Supper is no doubt indicated, close quote. F.F. Bruce, Book of Acts, page 79. For 27, he holds that, quote, the breaking of the bread probably denotes a fellowship meal in the course of which the Eucharist was celebrated, close quote.

Bruce, Book of Acts, 408. Marshall understands the breaking of the bread in 4.32 as Luke's term for what Paul calls the Lord's Supper, and takes they assembled to break bread in 20 and verse 7 in the same manner. Howard Marshall, Acts, Tyndale New Testament Commentary, replacement volume, pages 83 and 325. We agree that 4:32 probably refers to the Lord's Supper observed as a fellowship meal, and that 20 and verse 7 definitely does because of the ecclesiastical context.

"On the first day of the week, we assembled to break bread." Paul spoke to them, Acts 20 and verse 7. Peterson displays fairness when although he disagrees with J. Boehm, he cites Boehm's conclusion in a footnote. Quote, the meal in 20 and verse 7 within the context of the Pauline mission must be the cultic meal described by Paul as the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11 and verse 20.

Peterson, Acts of the Apostle, page 161, note 109, citing J. Boehm, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, volume 3, page 731. Kittel, 3731. Fourth, the Christians devoted themselves to prayer.

They not only shared a hunger for apostolic theology, sharing Christ with one another, and partaking in the Lord's Supper together, but they gave themselves over to corporate prayers. Larkin perceptively notes, quote, Luke portrays prayer as integral to the church's life. It is the essential link between Jesus and his people as they carry out his kingdom work under his guidance and his strength.

Larkin, Acts, page 61. In our next lecture, we will pick this up and continue looking at the New Testament people of God in the book of Acts.

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