

## **Dr. Robert A. Peterson, The Theology of Luke-Acts, Session 15, Peterson, The Church in Acts, Part 2**

This is Dr. Robert A. Peterson in his teaching on The Theology of Luke-Acts. This is session 15, Peterson, the church in Acts, Part 2.

We continue our studies through on Lukan theology, especially now that in the book of Acts, and let us bow before the Lord.

Gracious Father, thank you for your word. Thank you for giving us the same Holy Spirit who gave it through prophets and apostles of old. Lord, illuminate us, give us understanding and hearts quick to praise you, to do your will, and to share the good news with others. We pray, in Jesus' name, amen.

The verses that follow, Acts 2:42, tell of God's work among his people who shared these godly activities. The Christians were filled with awe, and the apostles performed many signs and wonders, verse 43. The next two verses describe a remarkable pooling of goods and wealth so that no one was in need.

This is described further in 4:32-37. The sharing was voluntary. Compare 5:3 and 4, where Paul tells Ananias or Sapphira, wasn't the field yours to sell or not? Wasn't the money yours to give or not? So, their sin was not their failure to give, their sin was lying. The sharing was voluntary, and the result was great unity.

Compare Acts 4:32. Daily, they met together in the temple and shared meals in their homes with joyful and sincere hearts. Praise God and enjoy the favor of all the people, verse 47. God's grace was evident in their midst and outreach, and as a result, 2:47, the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Acts 2:42-47 gives us insight into the daily lives and activities of the earliest Christians. The first thing to be said is that their life was a common one, shared by all who believed in Christ. They committed themselves to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship in Christ, to common meals and the Lord's Supper, and to pray for one another and for outreach.

Many voluntarily shared goods and money so that no one suffered from need. The Hebrew Christian believers spent much time together in the temple and sharing food in one another's homes. They were filled with sincerity of faith, with joy in the spirit, and with praise to God.

They were awestruck at what God was doing, including signs and wonders by the apostles. God gave them favor with unbelievers, and he brought many to embrace

the gospel. Our fourth passage is Servants of the Early Church, Acts 6:1-7. Luke does not hide the problems and controversies of the early church.

Rather, he shows how the believers worked together to solve them. A noteworthy problem arose between the Hellenists and the Hebraists. Hellenists were persons who spoke Greek, and here they were Christians who did so.

By contrast, Hebraists were Jewish Christians whose everyday spoken language was Aramaic or, less likely, Hebrew. Ben Witherington III, *Acts of the Apostles*, Commentary 241. Luke reports that the Hellenists complained that their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of material goods, Acts 6.1. When word of this reached the apostles, they acted.

They called the whole church together and recommended that the believers choose seven men of good reputation, full of the spirit and wisdom, whom we can appoint to this duty, Acts 6:3. The apostles realized they did not have time to care for the widows on top of their ministries of the word of God and prayer. Honoring their commitment to these ministries, they suggested this alternative. Their chief goal was to devote themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word, Acts 6:4. The church was pleased with this suggestion, and so they chose Stephen, a man full of faith in the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas, a convert from Antioch, Acts 6:5. The apostles led and involved the congregation in solving the problem.

It is noteworthy that the church chose Hellenists to oversee the ministry to Hellenist widows. Witherington elucidates, quote, the list in verse 5 includes only men with Greek names, which is surely no accident. This means to suggest, this seems to suggest, that the community as a whole, in order to avoid even the appearance of favoritism, names mostly, if not exclusively, Greek-speaking Jewish Christians to administer the food distribution.

Witherington, *Acts of the Apostles* 250. Next, the apostles commissioned the seven servants by praying and laying their hands on them, verse 6. Not only were the believers pleased with the outcome, but God was pleased as well. For Luke speaks of God's word spreading and of his adding greatly to the number of disciples in Jerusalem.

Remarkably, this included, "a large group of priests," verse 7. Acts 6:1-7 instructs us concerning the people of God in the New Testament. Their existence was not utopian, for Luke presents a complaint that had the potential of dividing the early believers. We learn that the apostles did not shirk the mantle of leadership that fell upon their shoulders.

Instead, they, Hebraists, led, but not in an authoritarian manner, for they listened to the complaint of the Hellenists and appealed to the wisdom of the whole body of believers to confirm their proposed solution. The apostles provided direction, for the seven stood before them and were commissioned by them. But at the same time, the apostles wanted to please God's people.

The solution to the widows receiving short shrift shows the existence of ethnic diversity in both the makeup and leadership of the church. It was God's will for Hebraists and Hellenists to work together for the good of the church. As God led them to do so, He extended His hand of blessing on their work.

For Luke reports, verse 7 and the word of God continued to increase, and the number of disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem. David Peterson draws a connection between the godly way the problem was solved and the growth of the church. Quote, the satisfactory solution of the conflict in the Jerusalem church made it possible for this ministry of the gospel to flourish and for church growth to take place even more rapidly.

Church growth continued because the word of God had free course among the believers, and outsiders were able to witness its practical effect in a loving, united community as well as hear its challenge from the lips of the apostles. Peterson, *Acts of the Apostles*, page 236. Fifth passage, God saves Gentiles, Acts 10.

Acts 10, 34 through 48. When David Peterson, in his Acts commentary, begins a 45-page summary of the theology of Acts, his first heading is God and His plan. The first sentence sets the tone, "God makes known His powerful presence and purpose in the narrative of Acts by direct action and speech. There's no way I can read all these verses. And through angelic and human messengers, again, 10 verses, with the latter regularly using scripture to proclaim the character and will of God." Peterson, *Acts of the Apostles*, page 54.

Nowhere in Acts is the plan of God more prominent and His presence and purpose more evident than in the story of Cornelius. God used supernatural means to break through Peter's cultural prejudice.

The Gentile Cornelius was a Roman centurion and a God-fearer, which means he was attracted to Judaism because of its monotheism and ethics but had not submitted to circumcision. Bruce explains how the obstacle that made it difficult for Peter to reach Cornelius lay on Peter's side. "a God-fearer had no objection to the society of Jews, but even a moderately Orthodox Jew would not willingly enter the dwelling of a Gentile God-fearer, though he were." Bruce, *Book of Acts*, 217.

Cornelius was devout and led a God-fearing family.

His prayers and philanthropy were well known. God sent him a vision via an angel whereby he directed him to contact Peter, Acts 10:2 through 8. Cornelius obeyed immediately. I have failed here.

I need to read the text. Acts 10:34 through 48. It's too long.

Here's the part. So, Peter opened his mouth and said, truly, I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation, anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, he is Lord of all.

You yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who are oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all that he did, both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem.

They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and made him appear not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him, all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.

While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles, for they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Then they asked him to remain for some days. God sent Cornelius a vision via an angel whereby he directed him to contact Peter. Acts 10:2 through 8. Cornelius obeyed immediately, but the Lord had a harder time with Peter.

With him, God resorted to extreme measures. The following day, when Peter went to pray, he became hungry and, quote, fell into a trance. He saw a vision of heaven open and an object that resembled a large sheet coming down, being lowered by its four corners to the earth.

Acts 10, verse 11. In the sheet were different varieties of unclean animals, which the law, Leviticus 9, forbade Jews from eating. However, a voice said, get up, Peter, kill and eat.

In contrast to Cornelius's ready response, Peter replied, no, Lord. Yikes. Acts 10:14.

That is what we call an oxymoron. No, does not go with Lord. And Peter protested that nothing unclean had ever entered his mouth.

The voice came to Peter again, correcting him. Quote, what God has made clean, do not call impure. Verse 15.

Before the vision ended, the voice came yet a third time, emphasizing God's message to Peter. What was the point of the message? To declare all foods clean? Yes, but that declaration was symbolic of a much more important message. God wanted the good news of Jesus to go to the unclean, as it were, Gentiles.

Peter was pondering the meaning of the vision when messengers from Cornelius arrived, asking for Simon Peter. Verses 17 and 18. The Holy Spirit spoke to Peter, telling him to accompany the men because the spirit had sent them.

Verses 19 and 20. Peter met the men who told him the angel's instruction to Cornelius to visit Peter and request a message from him. Verses 21 and 22.

Peter gave them lodging, and the next day, they went with some Jewish Christians to Cornelius' house in Caesarea. Verses 23 and 24. The Lord couldn't have made it any more explicit, could he? Oh, my goodness.

Well, it's understandable given the Old Testament background and the way the early New Testament, Jews in the New Testament and even the Hebrew Christians understood these, the vision from between Jew and Gentile. Cornelius had been expecting Peter and had gathered relatives and close friends. He fell at Peter's feet, but Peter reproved him and helped him up.

Peter, seeing a large group of people, explained how it had been forbidden of him to associate with foreigners, but that God had changed his heart and that is why he had come. "God has shown me I must not call any person impure or unclean."

Verse 28. Peter then asked why they had sent for him. Verse 29.

Cornelius explained how God had sent an angel to instruct him to invite Peter to his house. Cornelius thanked Peter for coming and said, so now we are all in the presence of God to hear everything you have been commanded by the Lord. Verse 33.

Talk about an underhanded pitch. Man, oh man! Peter began a sermon explaining how God does not show favoritism and neither should he for, “in every nation the person who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.”

Verse 35. David Peterson clarifies, “this does not mean that Cornelius was already saved before he met Peter, but that non-Jews are, quote, acceptable or welcome to come to Christ on the same basis as Jews.” Peterson, Acts of the Apostles 335.

That basis, of course, is by God's grace through faith in Christ.

Peter said that God sent the gospel of reconciliation to Jews through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. Verse 36. Peter rehearsed Jesus' earthly ministry after God gave him the powerful Holy Spirit so that he, quote, went about doing good and healing all who were under the tyranny of the devil.

Verse 38. Peter and the other apostles were witnesses of Jesus' life, death, and especially his resurrection, for they ate and drank with the risen Christ. God commissioned the apostles, including Peter, to testify to Christ being the judge of all.

Peter concluded with these words, quote, all the prophets testify about him. That through his name, everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins.

Verse 43. The following verses indicate that Cornelius and those gathered with him believed in Jesus for salvation. God worked mightily for, quote, while Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all who had heard the word.

As a result, the Jewish believers who had accompanied Peter were astonished to hear the Gentiles speak in tongues and praise of God, for this was evidence that God had poured out his spirit upon them, even as he had upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost. Verses 45 and 46. At Peter's suggestion, the Gentile believers were baptized with water, after which Peter stayed there for a few days.

Verses 47 and 48. God's saving of the family and friends of Cornelius increases our understanding of the identity of the New Testament people of God. Students of Luke and his writings point to his use of repetition to highlight significant events.

They note three such events in Acts, as we saw previously in the work of Dennis Johnson. One, God's pouring out the spirit at Pentecost. The event occurs in Acts 2:1 to 13.

It is rehearsed in Acts 11:16, and mentioned at the Jerusalem Council, Acts 15:8. Three events are repeated for emphasis, underlining their importance. Pouring out the spirit of Pentecost, Acts 2:1 to 13, 11:16, and 15:8. Paul's conversion, Acts 9:1 to 30, 22:1 to 16, 26:2 to 18. Paul's conversion, 9:1 to 30, 22:1 to 16, 26:2 to 18.

Three events, Pentecost, Paul's conversion, and number three, the conversion of Cornelius were that important. The event, Acts 10:44 to 47. Rehearsals, 11:4 to 17, and you better believe it, at the council again, 15:7, 10, 44, 47, 11:4 to 17, 15: 7. Why does the third merit inclusion with the first two colossal events? Are you kidding me? Pentecost is a major transition in the life of the church.

Gasp! And the conversion of Paul? Is there anyone more important, pardon my French, except Jesus? Wow! Because it too, the conversion of Cornelius is important and had an enormous effect. Already in the Abrahamic covenant, God had planned to save the Gentiles. Genesis 12:3. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you, I will curse.

Here it is, 12:3 of Genesis. And in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Language very close to that, in Genesis 22:18, concerning the sacrifice of Isaac, or nearly so, Paul says, in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

Both the families and the nations, the peoples, the Gentiles. Already in the Abrahamic covenant, God had planned to save the Gentiles. The prophets predicted the same thing.

For example, Isaiah 49:7, such an important text. I will make you as a light for the nations, and that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth. Isaiah 49:7. Amos 9:10, 11, and 12 should be added.

And Luke prepares readers for Gentile inclusion in the people of God at the beginning and end of his gospel. Simeon, Luke 2:32. Amazingly, did Simeon understand fully what came out of his mouth? I don't know.

I don't think prophets, well, 1 Peter 1 tells us they didn't always understand what came out of there. Luke 2:32. He holds the baby Jesus in his arms and says, my eyes have seen your salvation, Lord.

A baby that you prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel. There's the beginning. There's an inclusion here.

At the beginning of Luke's gospel, we have what is called Gentile inclusion. It is the same in the end. How many times have I read Luke 24 in these lectures? But it's important.

Again, Luke 24:47. And that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name, Jesus' name, to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Already in the Abrahamic covenant, this sentence is so important.

God had planned to save the Gentiles. The prophets predicted the same thing. And Luke prepares readers for Gentile inclusion in the people of God at the beginning and end of his gospel and at the beginning of Acts 1:8. And you'll be my witnesses, dot, dot, dot, to the end of the earth.

However, the predicted Gentile inclusion did not happen. One thing is prediction, and you can say, well, God's prediction is going to come true. That's true.

But the God who predicts for prophecy to come true not only means God has all knowledge and ability to predict the future, it also means he is the God of providence, who controls the future to make the prophecy come true. The predicted Gentile inclusion did not happen until God used reluctant Peter. No, Lord! Goodness.

The Bible is so honest; it's amazing. A leading Jewish Christian apostle to preach the message of salvation to the Gentiles, namely Cornelius and his companions. Bach elucidates how God purposefully and personally orchestrated this.

Bock, in his outstanding book, *A Theology of Luke and Acts*, pages 113, 114, how he, quote, here Gentile inclusion is the direct work of God. A major point in Luke-Acts. This is why God is so active in these events.

These actions have had come, had to have come at his direction. As part of his plan to bring together Jews and Gentiles into one community. If anyone complains about Gentiles being included, their gripe is with God.

Close quote. As a result, the New Testament people of God include believing Jews and Gentiles. In fact, believers in Christ are of any ethnicity or national origin.

This is because, as Peter learned the hard way "God does not show favoritism." Acts 10:34. God's New Testament people are those who have been reconciled to God and to one another.

Excuse me, through Jesus Christ, because, quote, he is Lord of all. Acts 10:36. There are those who know that Jesus, whom God appointed, quote, to be the judge of the living and the dead.

Verse 42 is their Lord and Savior. This is because the New Testament people of God are those who believe in him for the forgiveness of sins. Verse 43 and are baptized.

Verse 44. The people of God are those of the new era, Jew and Gentile, who have received the Holy Spirit, though not with supernatural signs, as in the case of the apostles at Pentecost and Cornelius. Eight references to the spirit occur in the Cornelius story.



The Spirit falling on the Gentile believers has resulted in this episode being called, quote, the Pentecost of the Gentile world. This text and others that tie the spirit to the new era of life and covenant indicate that the spirit is also associated with salvation and is a key gift of the new era. Bock, *Theology of Luke and Acts*, 223.

Lastly, we learn from this passage that God's people love to worship him. We see this in Cornelius, his family, and his friends praising God. Verse 46.

Larkin is accurate. "the experience of salvation always invokes praise to the giver of salvation." Larkin, *Acts*, 169.

So, it is in this case as Gentile believers declare the greatness of God. Passage six. God sovereignly works among Gentiles amidst persecution.

Acts 13:44 through 52, which I'm going to read. The next Sabbath, almost a whole city gathered in Pisidian Antioch to hear the word of the Lord. But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him.

Here, opposition to the apostolic ministry is based on jealousy. How petty, which really means pride. And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, it was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life.

Behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us saying, and he quotes Isaiah 49:6. I'm sorry. Yes, 49:6 is correct.

For the Lord has commanded, for so the Lord has commanded us saying, I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth. There's that Isaiah passage again. And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord.

And as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord spread, was spreading throughout the whole region. But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district.

But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. God serenely works among Jews and Gentiles amidst persecution, Acts 13:44 through 52.

On his first missionary journey, Paul preached a sermon in a synagogue in Antioch, Pisidia, in which he traced the history of Israel from the Exodus through the

wilderness wanderings, the conquest of Canaan, judges, Saul's reign, and then King David. Building on the promises of the Davidic covenant, Paul proclaims that from God, from David, sorry, Paul proclaims that from David, quote, God brought to Israel, the savior Jesus, Acts 13:23. Paul recalled John the Baptist ministry and prediction of the coming of the Messiah as one far greater than John, verses 24 and 25.

Perhaps John the Baptist plays more of a role in the New Testament than many of us realize. Wow. Paul told his fellow Jews and God-fearers that God had sent the message of salvation to them.

Paul summarized how Jews and Gentiles in Jerusalem together unwittingly fulfilled Old Testament predictions by crucifying Jesus, although he was innocent, verses 26 to 29. God raised Jesus from the dead who appeared to many witnesses, who in turn proclaimed the gospel that God promised to their ancestors, verses 30 to 32. Paul appealed to Old Testament passages that predicted the Messiah's coming, Psalm 2:7, Isaiah 55:3, and Psalm 16:10.

And Paul proclaimed them fulfilled not in David, but in Jesus and his resurrection, Acts 13:33 through 37. Paul then preaches that salvation through Jesus includes the forgiveness of sins. He elaborates on forgiveness by teaching justification, not by works, but by faith in Christ, verses 38 to 39.

In Acts, Luke speaks often of the results of Christ's atoning death but little of that atonement itself. One clear place. See Acts 20:28.

The church of God, which the Lord, some manuscripts say, the church of the Lord, some manuscripts say the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood. Only here does he mention justification, that word. Acts 13:40, and 41 adds a warning of judgment from Habakkuk 1:5 on those who miss what God is doing.

As Larkin shows, quote, parallel to the offer of liberation, the warning of judgment for those who fail to recognize that God is affecting salvation through Jesus. Parallel to the offer of liberation is the warning of judgment. Larkin, Acts, 204.

The people urged Paul and Barnabas to say more about these things the next Sabbath. After the synagogue service, believing Jews and proselytes followed the apostles to learn more about God's grace. Acts 13:42, 43.

On the next Saturday, a huge crowd gathered in Pisidian Antioch, quote, to hear the word of the Lord from the mouth of Paul and Barnabas. Acts 13, 4. Observing the large number that had come to hear the apostles, the Jews, out of jealousy contradicted Paul's words and hurled insults at him. Verse 44.

With boldness, the missionaries responded, it was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first. Since you reject it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, we are turning to the Gentiles. Verse 46.

Notice, “word of God” occurs many more times in Luke-Acts, than it does in Matthew, Mark, and John altogether. Paul and Barnabas, the words, the word of God. Paul and Barnabas cite Isaiah 49, 6 as their mandate to evangelize the Gentiles.

“I have made you a light for the Gentiles to bring salvation to the ends of the earth.” Isn't Jesus the light? Yes, but through Jesus, so are his representatives. In its original context, that verse spoke of Isaiah's servant of the Lord, the nation of Israel, first of all, and then secondly, an individual Israelite who stands for the nation.

Luke 2:32 identifies Jesus himself as the foundational fulfillment of Isaiah's words, and here Luke applies it to Paul and Barnabas. Howard Marshall ties these truths together. Marshall, Acts, page 230.

Quote, the early Christians saw the fulfillment of the prophecy in Jesus. Compare the citation of Isaiah 53:7, and 8 in Acts 8:32 through 35. But the present passage asserts early Christians saw the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah in Jesus, but the present passage asserts that the mission of the servant is also the task of the followers of Jesus.

Thus, the task of Israel, which she failed to carry out, has passed to Jesus and then to his people as the new Israel. It is the task of bringing the light of revelation and salvation to all the peoples of the world. Compare the clear allusion to Isaiah 49:6, already in Luke 2:29 to 32, in the mouth, from the mouth of Simeon.

Upon hearing these words, the Gentiles rejoiced and honored the word of the Lord. Verse, Acts 13:48. They were overjoyed that the gospel, the message of salvation in Jesus was for them.

They believed the words the apostles quoted from Isaiah, and they believed in Jesus. Though some claim that God's election is based on foreseen faith, this reverses the order of scripture. For Luke adds, and all who had been appointed to eternal life believed.

Verse 48. Barrett is straightforward. C.K. Barrett, Acts 1 to 14, international Critical Commentary [ICC]. Page 658. Barrett's two volumes are probably unsurpassed for scholarship. Unfortunately, he does not always regard Luke as a trustworthy historian, and thus a Christian should handle his \$100 commentaries, each volume, with care, or perhaps not at all, and scholars as well should be careful.

Barrett is straightforward, but if, same with the Gospel of John, he tells you what it means usually, whether he believes it or not, I'm not sure. Barrett is straightforward. Quote, the present verse is an unqualified statement of absolute predestination, the eternal purpose of God, he cites Calvin, as is found anywhere in the New Testament.

Those believed who are appointed, the passive implies by God, to do so. Close quote. I learned so much from C.K. Barrett on the gospel of John.

I taught for ten years at Biblical Theological Seminary in Hatfield, Pennsylvania, in both New Testament and theology. One day in the hall of the school, a student said, Doc, did you read the introduction to Barrett's commentary on John? I said I don't know if I did. He says, where he says, he doesn't know if Jesus actually did or said these things.

We were both shocked, because the commentary itself explains very well what Jesus is purported to have said and done, which, of course, my student and I believe was the case. How could a man who questioned, anyway, the proof is in the pudding. And John Evans' justly famous guide to the commentaries of both Testaments says for Acts, the best academic commentary is that by C.K. Barrett.

Be careful. He's a critical scholar. Well said. Both of those things are well said.

And here, he says correctly, Acts 13:48 teaches unconditional election or absolute predestination. It is not that God foresees faith and chooses people. It is that those who are ordained to eternal life by God previously believed.

Faith is the result of God's sovereign choice, not vice versa. We next encounter, as commonly in Acts, contrary responses to the apostolic preaching. On the positive side, the word of the Lord spread through the whole region, verse 49.

Conversely, the Jews inflamed well-known, God-fearing women and the leading men of the city, with the result that Paul and Barnabas were persecuted and driven out of the region, verse 50. In response, the missionaries shook the dust off their feet and moved on, 51. Those who had believed were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit, verse 52.

Luke, Acts, has many references to joy, meant more than in certainly the other Gospels. Acts 13:48-52 teaches us at least five things concerning the New Testament people of God. In summary, first, they are Jews and Gentiles whom God chose for salvation, Acts 13:26-48. Behind salvation stands God's eternal election, Ephesians 1:4, 2 Timothy 1:9. Of his people, Acts 13:48.

Second, God sent the message of salvation, verse 26, that springs from God's grace, verse 43. God sent the message of salvation that springs from his grace.

Third, they are believers in the apostle, New Testament people of God are believers in the apostle's message concerning Old Testament predictions of the Messiah Savior and his exaltation, verses 33-37. They reject the Jewish and Roman evaluation of Jesus that led to his cross and rejoice in the father's evaluation, who vindicated his son by raising him to his right hand.

Fourth, they believe in Jesus for forgiveness and justification, verses 38-39.

Fifth, they follow the apostle's example and are willing to suffer persecution for Jesus' sake, verse 50.

Sixth, New Testament believers, though they sometimes must endure persecution, can be, filled with the joy that the good news imparted and with the Holy Spirit, F.F. Bruce, the book of Acts, page 285.

In our next lecture, we will continue my brief treatment of the people of God in the book of Acts and then move on to other matters.

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