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BIBLE CENTER CHURCH 2026

THE BOOK OF ACTS

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ACTS

— A GOSPEL — MOVEMENT

GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY FOR ALL PEOPLE



"YOU WILL BE MY WITNESSES IN JERUSALEM, IN ALL JUDEA AND SAMARIA, AND TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH." - ACTS 1:8

THE BOOK OF ACTS



ACTS 1-10

A GOSPEL MOVEMENT

GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY FOR ALL PEOPLE

In Luke 2:10, the angels announce Jesus' birth to the shepherds. They describe the coming of Jesus as **"good news of great joy for all people."** "Bringing good news" is used in the New Testament as a description of the sharing of the Gospel. Jesus is the centerpiece of the Gospel, and the coming of Jesus is the fulfillment of all the promises and covenants of God to save the world.

The Gospel is for **all people**. Everyone now has access to the great joy found in Jesus.

Jesus then begins His ministry by approaching several fishermen and challenges them to, *"follow Me and I will make you fishers of people"* (Matthew 4:19). This good news would be taken to **all people** through those who follow Jesus. Jesus transforms His disciples into *"fishers of people"* —followers who then make more disciples.

The book of Acts then fast forwards us to the days of the early church. The Gospel is still the same and the mission has not changed. Jesus has returned to the Father, the Holy Spirit is given to embolden and empower the church, and the Gospel begins to spread to "all people" just as it was declared in Luke 2:10.

The **Gospel Movement** that started in Acts continues until Jesus returns.

Today, we are committed to the same Gospel and the same mission (Connect - Grow - Multiply). We **connect** people to Jesus (the Gospel message) and to His church (the Gospel mission). Disciples of Jesus are to **grow** into the likeness of Jesus through the HABITS (Have a Group, Attend Regularly, Be in the Bible, Invest Faithfully, Talk to God, Share Your Faith) He has given us for spiritual transformation.

All who call themselves disciples of Jesus are called to **multiply** by helping more people follow Jesus until **all people** have heard. Multiplication starts with addition as each of us reach our **one more** for Jesus. A **movement of multiplication** launches when an increasing number of disciples continue to reach their one more until the world is saturated with the Gospel.

How to Use This Devotional

The devotional includes 12 studies through Acts 1-10. There are many ways to study a book of the Bible. Our focus through these chapters will be to see how Jesus **launches, anchors, and leads** this movement of taking the Gospel to the world. Each devotional will include 3 types of questions:

- **Observation** (what does it say?)
- **Interpretation** (what does it mean?)
- **Application** (how do I respond?)

The devotional is designed to be read **individually** or together **in a group**. Groups give us the opportunity to hear what others are learning and the opportunity to discuss differing points of view. Space is often given for you to **bring your booklet with you on Sundays** to write out sermon notes on the passage.

As we study the book of Acts, it is important to understand it as a historical narrative describing the work of God in and through the early church. Each story takes place in a moment of time and many of the circumstances will never be repeated. Acts teaches us what did happen, not always what should have happened. As all historical narratives, Acts is ***descriptive and not always prescriptive***. In many cases, the occurrences in Acts will exemplify and demonstrate principles and commands given to the church throughout the teaching of the New Testament. It becomes important to understand when Acts is speaking to a moment in time and when it is speaking to the church for all time.

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1. THE PLAN

ACTS 1:1-11

OBSERVATION

How does Luke characterize Jesus's ministry in verses 1-3? (What did He *begin* to do, and what did He *continue* to do after the resurrection?)

What specific geographic scope does Jesus lay out for the witnesses in verse 8?

INTERPRETATION

Jesus says the disciples will receive power (v. 8) to be *witnesses*. What is the relationship between the power and the witnessing? Are they separate goals?

How is Jesus' plan connected to "the good news of great joy for all people"?

APPLICATION (CONNECT, GROW, AND MULTIPLY)

The movement is local ("Jerusalem"), regional ("Judea and Samaria"), and global ("ends of the earth"). Which of these three spheres excite you the most? What would you consider our Jerusalem and Judea/Samaria?

The plan hinges on the promise of Jesus's return (v. 11). How does the certainty of the Second Coming motivate you to live out the mission right now?

Jesus commands them to be His witnesses (v. 8). We've been challenged to intentionally reach our "one more." Who is your "one more" and what can you do this week to demonstrate and share the love of Christ with them?

The disciples spent time gazing into the sky before the angels redirected them (v. 10). What are some things that draw our gaze and attention away from Jesus' mission in our lives?

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7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or periods that the Father has set by His own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

9 After He had said this, He was taken up as they were watching, and a cloud took Him out of their sight. 10 While He was going, they were gazing into heaven, and suddenly two men in white clothes stood by them. 11 They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you have seen Him going into heaven."



2. THE POWER

ACTS 1:12-2:13

OBSERVATION

In Acts 1:14, what do you learn about the spiritual lives of the disciples and the women?

Describe the moment and place that God used for Pentecost (the sending of the Spirit) (ch. 2)?

INTERPRETATION

Peter insists on replacing Judas (Acts 1:21-22). Why was being a “witness with us of His resurrection” the non-negotiable requirement for the new apostle?

How does the miracle of speaking in the tongues of the people (Acts 2:6, 11) immediately demonstrate that the Gospel “is for all people” (Luke 2:10)?

APPLICATION (CONNECT, GROW, AND MULTIPLY)

Some people sneered and said the disciples were drunk (2:13). In what modern context might the zeal or joy of a fully-committed Christian be misunderstood or mocked as foolishness?

The Apostles moved from praying in the upper room to proclaiming publicly in the Temple. What is the biggest barrier that keeps you from openly displaying and discussing your faith?

What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the ongoing mission of the church? How do we know if we are using the power of the Holy Spirit or our own power?

¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, which is near Jerusalem—a Sabbath day's journey away. ¹³ When they arrived, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴ They all were continually united in prayer, along with the women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and His brothers.

¹⁵ In those days Peter stood up among the brothers and sisters—the number of people who were together was about a hundred twenty—and said, ¹⁶ "Brothers and sisters, it was necessary that the Scripture be fulfilled that the Holy Spirit through the mouth of David foretold about Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷ For he was one of our number and shared in this ministry." ¹⁸ Now this man acquired a field with his unrighteous wages. He fell headfirst, his body burst open and his intestines spilled out. ¹⁹ This became known to all the residents of Jerusalem, so that in their own language that field is called *Hakeldama* (that is, "Field of Blood"). ²⁰ "For it is written in the Book of Psalms:

**Let his dwelling become desolate;
let no one live in it; and
Let someone else take his position.**

²¹ "Therefore, from among the men who have accompanied us during the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us— ²² beginning from the baptism of John until the day He was taken up from us—from among these, it is necessary that one become a witness with us of His resurrection."

²³ So they proposed two: Joseph, called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴ Then they prayed, "You, Lord, know everyone's hearts; show which of these two You have chosen ²⁵ to take the place in this apostolic ministry that Judas left to go where he belongs." ²⁶ Then they cast lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias and he was added to the eleven apostles.

2 When the day of Pentecost had arrived, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound like that of a violent rushing wind came from heaven, and it filled the whole house where they were staying. ³ They saw tongues like flames of fire that separated and rested on each one of them. ⁴ Then they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them.

⁵ Now there were Jews staying in Jerusalem, devout people from every nation under heaven. ⁶ When this sound occurred, a crowd came together and was confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. ⁷ They were astounded and amazed, saying, "Look, aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸ How is it that each of us can hear them in our own native language? ⁹ Parthians, Medes, Elamites; those who live in Mesopotamia, in Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts), ¹¹ Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the magnificent acts of God in our own tongues." ¹² They were all astounded and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" ¹³ But some sneered and said, "They're drunk on new wine."



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3. THE PROCLAMATION

ACTS 2:14-41

OBSERVATION

Peter quotes prophecies from Joel and David to support his message (vv. 16, 25, 34). Are these references for the day of Pentecost or for Christians everyday?

In Peter's sermon, what are the two titles or roles that God has assigned to Jesus (v. 36)?

INTERPRETATION

If someone claims today to have received a vision (v. 17) and references this passage, how would you handle that conversation?

The crowd was "pierced to the heart" (v. 37). What specific elements of Peter's proclamation (e.g., the resurrection, the call to repentance, the identity of Jesus) were the most likely to cause such a reaction?

APPLICATION (CONNECT, GROW, AND MULTIPLY)

The Jewish crowd asked, "Brothers, what should we do?" (v. 37). If a coworker (without a Biblical worldview or understanding) asked you that question today, how would you answer him/her? Would it align with Peter (v. 38)?

Peter uses Scripture to prove his claims about Jesus. How does increasing your *Be in the Bible* (HABITS) time help you grow the confidence needed to share and discuss the Gospel with others?

The result of the proclamation was the addition of 3,000 people (v. 41). Does the belief that God wants to add to your church motivate you to be more proactive to *Share your Faith* and *Reach your One More*? Why or why not?

¹⁴ Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed to them, "Fellow Jews and all you residents of Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and pay attention to my words.

¹⁵ For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it's only nine in the morning. ¹⁶ On the contrary, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ And it will be in the last days, says God, that I will pour out My Spirit on all people; then your sons and your daughters will prophesy,

your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams.

¹⁸ I will even pour out My Spirit on My servants in those days, both men and women

and they will prophesy.

¹⁹ I will display wonders in the heaven above

and signs on the earth below:

blood and fire and a cloud of smoke.

²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood

before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes.

²¹ Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

²² "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. ²³ Though He was delivered up according to God's determined plan and foreknowledge, you used lawless people to nail Him to a cross and kill Him. ²⁴ God raised Him up, ending the pains of death, because it was not possible for Him to be held by death. ²⁵ For David says of Him:

I saw the Lord ever before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

²⁶ Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices.

Moreover, my flesh will rest in hope,

²⁷ because You will not abandon me in Hades

or allow Your Holy One to see decay.

²⁸ You have revealed the paths of life to me; You will fill me with gladness in Your presence.

²⁹ "Brothers and sisters, I can confidently speak to you about the patriarch David: He is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn an oath to him to seat one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹ Seeing what was to come, he spoke concerning the resurrection of the Messiah: **He was not abandoned in Hades, and His flesh did not experience decay.**

³² "God has raised this Jesus; we are all witnesses of this. ³³ Therefore, since He has been exalted to the right hand of God and has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, He has poured out what you both see and hear. ³⁴ For it was not David who ascended into the heavens, but he himself says:

The Lord declared to my Lord,

'Sit at My right hand

³⁵ until I make Your enemies Your footstool.'

³⁶ "Therefore let all the house of Israel know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."

³⁷ When they heard this, they were pierced to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?"

³⁸ Peter replied, "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. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call." ⁴⁰ With many other words he testified and strongly urged them, saying, "Be saved from this corrupt generation!" ⁴¹ So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added to them.



4. THE PEOPLE

ACTS 2:42-47

OBSERVATION

List the four core commitments of the early church described in verse 42.

Where did the early believers meet for worship and fellowship (v. 46)?

INTERPRETATION

The believers held “all things in common” (v. 44). Does this passage mandate a communal lifestyle for all churches today, or does it exemplify a principle?

What is the direct relationship between the people’s devotion (v. 42) and the awe and growth experienced by the community (vv. 43, 47)?

APPLICATION (CONNECT, GROW, AND MULTIPLY)

Verse 42 emphasizes “the fellowship.” Is your current church connection characterized by deep fellowship or casual attendance? What is one step you can take to make your fellowship more intentional and devoted (Have a Group)?

Which of the core commitments in verse 42 (teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, prayer) is the weakest point in your personal spiritual *HABITS* journey, and how can you strengthen it this week?

The Lord added to their number *daily* (v. 47). If multiplication is part of the mission, what practical step must the church (or your group) take to ensure that growth is continually happening, not just sporadically?

⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles. ⁴⁴ Now all the believers were together and held all things in common. ⁴⁵ They sold their possessions and property

and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need.⁴⁶ Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts,⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. Every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

NOTES



5. THE GOSPEL IS CENTRAL

ACTS 3:1-26

OBSERVATION

What was the physical state of the man at the Beautiful Gate, and what was his daily activity (v. 2)?

What specific message does Peter deliver to the crowd after the healing that explains the power behind the miracle (vv. 12-16)?

INTERPRETATION

Peter says, "I don't have silver or gold, but what I do have, I give you" (v. 6). What does this statement reveal about the immediate *value system* of the early church compared to the world's?

Peter quickly pivots the crowd's attention from the miracle to the identity of Jesus. Why is it essential to anchor the miraculous power of God in the person of Jesus Christ, rather than in the apostles or the miracle itself? What does this look like in our lives as we serve others?

APPLICATION (CONNECT, GROW, AND MULTIPLY)

Where in your daily routine (like Peter and John going to the temple for prayer) do you have consistent opportunities to encounter the needs of others?

Peter shows compassion by speaking and acting. How can you move beyond simply observing someone's need and *connect* them to the message of the Gospel?

Peter uses the man's healing as a *bridge* to deliver a message about the Messiah. What "good deed" or common interest in your own life could you use this week as a bridge to share the Gospel with your "one more"?

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¹⁷ "And now, brothers and sisters, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your leaders also did. ¹⁸ In this way God fulfilled what He had predicted through all the prophets—that His Messiah would suffer. ¹⁹ Therefore repent and turn back, so that your sins may be wiped out, ²⁰ that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus, who has been appointed for you as the Messiah. ²¹ Heaven must receive Him until the time of the restoration of all things, which God spoke about through His holy prophets from the beginning. ²² **Moses said: The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers. You must listen to everything He tells you.** ²³ **And everyone who does not listen to that prophet will be completely cut off from the people.**

24 "In addition, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those after him, have also foretold these days. 25 You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your ancestors, saying to Abraham, **And all the families of the earth will be blessed through your offspring.** 26 God raised up His servant and sent Him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your evil ways."



6. **BOLDNESS IS NEEDED**

ACTS 4:1-31

OBSERVATION

What specific aspect of Peter and John's teachings angered the priests and Sadducees (v. 2)?

How do Peter and John respond to persecution?

INTERPRETATION

Peter asserts, "There is salvation in no one else...by which we must be saved" (v. 12). How does this statement anchor the Gospel in exclusivity, and why is that necessary for the mission in today's culture?

The council ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus (v. 18). How do Peter and John justify their decision to disobey human authority (vv. 19-20)?

APPLICATION (CONNECT, GROW, AND MULTIPLY)

What do we learn from Peter and John's response to persecution?

What does this passage teach us about the connection between prayer and Jesus' mission?

The apostles prayed for the ability to speak God's word with **all boldness** (v. 29). What would **all boldness** look like in your life?

4 While they were speaking to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple police, and the Sadducees confronted them, ² because they were annoyed that they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. ³ So they seized them and took them into custody until the next day since it was already evening. ⁴ But many of those who heard the message believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.

⁵ The next day, their rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem ⁶ with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and all the members of the high-priestly family. ⁷ After they had Peter and John stand before them, they began to question them: "By what power or in what name have you done this?"

⁸ Then Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders: ⁹ If we are being examined today about a good deed done to a disabled man, by what means he was healed, ¹⁰ let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified and whom God raised from the dead—by Him this man is standing here before you healthy. ¹¹ This Jesus is

**the stone rejected by you builders,
which has become the cornerstone.**

¹² There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved."

¹³ When they observed the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed and recognized that they had been with Jesus. ¹⁴ And since they saw the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in opposition. ¹⁵ After they ordered them to leave the Sanhedrin, they conferred among themselves, ¹⁶ saying, "What should we do with these men? For an obvious sign has been done through them, clear to everyone living in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷ But so that this

does not spread any further among the people, let's threaten them against speaking to anyone in this name again." ¹⁸ So they called for them and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

¹⁹ Peter and John answered them, "Whether it's right in the sight of God for us to listen to you rather than to God, you decide; ²⁰ for we are unable to stop speaking about what we have seen and heard."

²¹ After threatening them further, they released them. They found no way to punish them because the people were all giving glory to God over what had been done. ²² For this sign of healing had been performed on a man over forty years old.

²³ After they were released, they went to their own people and reported everything the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ When they heard this, they raised their voices together to God and said, "Master, You are the One who made the heaven, the earth, and the sea, and everything in them. ²⁵ You said through the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of our father David Your servant:

**Why do the Gentiles rage
and the peoples plot futile things?**

**²⁶ The kings of the earth take their stand
and the rulers assemble together
against the Lord and against His Messiah.**

²⁷ "For, in fact, in this city both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, assembled together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, ²⁸ to do whatever your hand and your will had predestined to take place. ²⁹ And now, Lord, consider their threats, and grant that your servants may speak your word with all boldness, ³⁰ while you stretch out your hand for healing, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." ³¹ When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God boldly.



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7. **GENEROSITY IS NORMAL**

ACTS 4:32-5:11

OBSERVATION

What evidence does the text give that "great grace was on all of them" (v. 33)?

What was the central lie that Ananias and Sapphira told Peter (vv. 3-4)?

INTERPRETATION

How does the description of the believers having "one heart and mind" (v. 32) connect to and support their radical generosity?

Peter clarifies to Ananias that he lied not to men, but to God/the Holy Spirit (v. 4). What does this severe judgment teach us about the sanctity and reality of the Holy Spirit's presence within the early church community?

APPLICATION (CONNECT, GROW, AND MULTIPLY)

The believers' unity was built on meeting needs (v. 35). How does "Invest Faithfully" (HABITS) in the financial and practical needs of the church and community help *Grow* you and others in the body of Christ?

Ananias and Sapphira lied about their generosity. How do people lie about it today? How might we see it in the church?

What are the spiritual gifts, skills, and resources that God has given you to use for the building up and betterment of the church?

What does our financial generosity tell us about our heart and perspective?

³⁶ Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus by birth, the one the apostles called Barnabas (which is translated Son of Encouragement), ³⁷ sold a field he owned, brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

³ "Ananias," Peter asked, "why has Satan filled

⁷ About three hours later, his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸ "Tell me," Peter asked her, "did you sell the land for this price?"

⁹ Then Peter said to her, "Why did you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out."

¹⁰ Instantly she dropped dead at his feet. When the young men came in, they found her dead, carried her out, and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹ Then great fear came on the whole church and on all who heard these things.

8. FAITHFULNESS IS IMPACT

ACTS 5:12-42

OBSERVATION

What was the *impact* of the apostles' ministry outside of the church (vv. 15-16)?

After being miraculously released, what did the angel command the apostles to do (v. 20)?

INTERPRETATION

The apostles were "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to be treated shamefully on behalf of the Name" (v. 41). What does this response reveal about how they defined their identity in Christ?

Gamaliel's advice (vv. 38-39) suggests that if the work is of human origin, it will fail, but if it is of God, it will succeed. How does the apostles' faithfulness provide the *proof* that their work was indeed of God?

APPLICATION (CONNECT, GROW, AND MULTIPLY)

Despite being threatened and jailed, the apostles "continued teaching and proclaiming the good news" (v. 42). What fear is currently hindering your faithfulness in *Sharing Your Faith* and connecting people to Jesus?

The impact of the apostles' ministry was not dependent on their freedom, but on their *faithfulness* to teaching and proclaiming (v. 42). How does remaining faithful in your spiritual HABITS (like *Talk to God* and *Be in the Bible*) anchor your long-term impact?

The apostles were teaching "in the temple, and in various homes" (v. 42). How should a healthy multiplication movement balance large, public gatherings (temple) with small, relational discipleship (homes)?

¹² Many signs and wonders were being done among the people through the hands of the apostles. They were all together in Solomon's Colonnade. ¹³ No one else dared to join them, but the people spoke well of them. ¹⁴ Believers were added to the Lord in increasing numbers—multitudes of both men and women. ¹⁵ As a result, they would carry the sick out into the streets and lay them on cots and mats so that when Peter came by, at least his shadow might fall on some of them. ¹⁶ In addition, a multitude came together from the towns surrounding Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

¹⁷ Then the high priest rose up. He and all who were with him, who belonged to the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. ¹⁸ So they arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. ¹⁹ But an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail during the night, brought them out, and said, ²⁰ "Go and stand in the temple, and tell the people all about this life." ²¹ Hearing this, they entered the temple at daybreak and began to teach.

When the high priest and those who were with him arrived, they convened the Sanhedrin—the full council of the Israelites—and sent orders to the jail to have them brought. ²² But when the servants got there, they did not find them in the jail; so they returned and reported, ²³ "We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing in front of the doors, but when we opened them, we found no one inside." ²⁴ As the captain of the temple police and the chief priests heard these things, they were baffled about them, wondering what would come of this.

²⁵ Someone came and reported to them, "Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple and teaching the people." ²⁶ Then the commander went with the servants and brought them in without force, because they were afraid the people might stone them. ²⁷ After they brought them in, they had them stand before

the Sanhedrin, and the high priest asked, ²⁸ "Didn't we strictly order you not to teach in this name? Look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this Man's blood."

²⁹ Peter and the apostles replied, "We must obey God rather than people. ³⁰ The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had murdered by hanging Him on a tree. ³¹ God exalted this Man to His right hand as ruler and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. ³² We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him."

³³ When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. ³⁴ But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law who was respected by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered the men to be taken outside for a little while. ³⁵ He said to them, "Men of Israel, be careful about what you're about to do to these men. ³⁶ Some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a group of about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, and all his followers were dispersed and came to nothing. ³⁷ After this man, Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and attracted a following. He also perished, and all his followers were scattered. ³⁸ So in the present case, I tell you, stay away from these men and leave them alone. For if this plan or this work is of human origin, it will fail; ³⁹ but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You may even be found fighting against God." They were persuaded by him. ⁴⁰ After they called in the apostles and had them flogged, they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus and released them. ⁴¹ Then they went out from the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to be treated shamefully on behalf of the Name. ⁴² Every day in the temple, and in various homes, they continued teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

NOTES

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9. STEPHEN THE MARTYR

ACTS 6-7

OBSERVATION

What specific problem arose that led the apostles to choose men to serve the widows (v. 1)? What qualities are required of these men? What does this teach us about the priorities of the church?

What qualities do you see in Stephen?

INTERPRETATION

The apostles stated that their primary duty was "prayer and the ministry of the word" (v. 4). How does this statement anchor the primary focus of the church's spiritual leadership in the Gospel Movement?

Stephen's service led to the word spreading and the disciples increasing greatly (v. 7). How does the faithful service of all members directly lead to multiplication and growth?

APPLICATION (CONNECT, GROW, AND MULTIPLY)

How can we continue to emphasize and prioritize the teaching of the Word and prayer in our church?

How can we raise up more men and women to serve the physical needs of the church and its people?

Christians in America are not being stoned for their faith. What are ways that Christianity is under attack in our country?

What qualities in Stephen do you want to see more developed in you?

6 In those days, as the disciples were increasing in number, there arose a complaint by the Hellenistic Jews against the Hebraic Jews that their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution. ² The Twelve summoned the whole company of the disciples and said, "It would not be right for us to give up preaching the word of God to wait on tables. ³ Brothers and sisters, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and wisdom, whom we can appoint to this duty. ⁴ But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." ⁵ This proposal pleased the whole company. So they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a convert from Antioch. ⁶ They had them stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

⁷ So the word of God spread, the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly in number, and a large group of priests became obedient to the faith.

⁸ Now Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹ Opposition arose, however, from some members of the Freedmen's Synagogue, composed of both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia, and they began to argue with Stephen. ¹⁰ But they were unable to stand up against his wisdom and the Spirit by whom he was speaking.

¹¹ Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, "We heard him speaking blasphemous words against Moses and God." ¹² They stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; so they came, seized him, and took him to the Sanhedrin. ¹³ They also presented false witnesses who said, "This man never stops speaking against this holy place and the law. ¹⁴ For we heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs that Moses handed down to us." ¹⁵ And all who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at him and saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

7 "Are these things true?" the high priest asked.

² "Brothers and fathers," he replied, "listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he settled in Haran, ³ and said to him: **Leave your country and relatives, and come to the land that I will show you.**

⁴ "Then he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. From there, after his father died, God had him move to this land in which you are now living. ⁵ He didn't give him an inheritance in it—not even a foot of ground—but He promised to give it to him as a possession, and to his descendants after him, even though he was childless. ⁶ God spoke in this way: His **descendants** would be **strangers in a foreign country, and they would enslave and oppress them for four hundred years.** ⁷ **I will judge the nation that they will serve as slaves,** God said. **After this, they will come out and worship Me in this place.** ⁸ And so He gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision. After this, he fathered Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day. Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob became the father of the twelve patriarchs.

⁹ "The patriarchs became jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt, but God was with him ¹⁰ and rescued him out of all his troubles. He gave him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who appointed him ruler over Egypt and over his whole household. ¹¹ Now a famine and great suffering came over all of Egypt and Canaan, and our ancestors could find no food. ¹² When Jacob heard there was grain in Egypt, he sent our ancestors there the first time. ¹³ The second time, Joseph revealed himself to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh. ¹⁴ Joseph invited his father Jacob and all his relatives, seventy-five people in all, ¹⁵ and Jacob went down to Egypt. He and our ancestors died there, ¹⁶ were carried back to Shechem, and were placed in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.

¹⁷ “As the time was approaching to fulfill the promise that God had made to Abraham, the people flourished and multiplied in Egypt ¹⁸ until a different king who did not know Joseph ruled over Egypt. ¹⁹ He dealt deceitfully with our race and oppressed our ancestors by making them abandon their infants outside so that they wouldn’t survive. ²⁰ At this time Moses was born, and he was beautiful in God’s sight. He was cared for in his father’s home for three months. ²¹ When he was put outside, Pharaoh’s daughter adopted and raised him as her own son. ²² So Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in his speech and actions.

²³ “When he was forty years old, he decided to visit his own people, the Israelites. ²⁴ When he saw one of them being mistreated, he came to his rescue and avenged the oppressed man by striking down the Egyptian. ²⁵ He assumed his people would understand that God would give them deliverance through him, but they did not understand. ²⁶ The next day he showed up while they were fighting and tried to reconcile them peacefully, saying, ‘Men, you are brothers. Why are you mistreating each other?’

²⁷ “But the one who was mistreating his neighbor pushed Moses aside, saying: **Who appointed you a ruler and a judge over us?**

²⁸ **Do you want to kill me, the same way you killed the Egyptian yesterday?**

²⁹ “When he heard this, Moses fled and became an exile in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons. ³⁰ After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in the flame of a burning bush. ³¹ When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight. As he was approaching to look at it, the voice of the Lord came: ³² **I am the God of your ancestors—the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.** Moses began to tremble and did not dare to look.

³³ “The Lord said to him: **Take off the sandals from your feet, because the place where you are standing is holy ground.** ³⁴ **I have certainly seen the oppression of My people in Egypt;**

I have heard their groaning and have come down to set them free. And now, come, I will send you to Egypt.

³⁵ “This Moses, whom they rejected when they said, **Who appointed you a ruler and a judge?**—this one God sent as a ruler and a deliverer through the angel who appeared to him in the bush. ³⁶ This man led them out and performed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness for forty years.

³⁷ “This is the Moses who said to the Israelites: **God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers.** ³⁸ He is the one who was in the assembly in the wilderness, with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our ancestors. He received living oracles to give to us. ³⁹ Our ancestors were unwilling to obey him. Instead, they pushed him aside, and in their hearts turned back to Egypt. ⁴⁰ They told Aaron: **Make us gods who will go before us. As for this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we don’t know what’s happened to him.** ⁴¹ They even made a calf in those days, offered sacrifice to the idol, and were celebrating what their hands had made. ⁴² God turned away and gave them up to worship the stars of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets:

House of Israel, did you bring Me offerings and sacrifices

for forty years in the wilderness?

⁴³ **You took up the tent of Moloch and the star of your god Rephan, the images that you made to worship.**

So I will send you into exile beyond Babylon.

⁴⁴ “Our ancestors had the tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness, just as He who spoke to Moses commanded him to make it according to the pattern he had seen. ⁴⁵ Our ancestors in turn received it and with Joshua brought it in when they dispossessed the nations that God drove out before them, until the days of David. ⁴⁶ He found favor in God’s sight and asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. ⁴⁷ It was Solomon, rather, who built him

**49 Heaven is My throne,
and the earth My footstool.
What sort of house will you build for Me?
says the Lord,
or what will be My resting place?
50 Did not My hand make all these things?**

⁵² Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They even killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become. ⁵³ You received the law under the direction of angels and yet have not kept it."

⁵⁷ They yelled at the top of their voices, covered their ears, and together rushed against him. ⁵⁸ They dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. And the witnesses laid their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹ While they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" ⁶⁰ He knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" And after saying this, he fell asleep.

10. PHILIP THE MISSIONARY

ACTS 8

OBSERVATION

What event catalyzed the disciples' scattering throughout Judea and Samaria (vv. 1, 4)?

Who does Philip specifically preach to in verses 5 and 26-39?

INTERPRETATION

The disciples were told to take the Gospel to Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (1:8), but they stayed in Jerusalem. Persecution began with the intention to destroy the church, but ultimately it propelled the Gospel to Judea and Samaria (Acts 1:8). How does God use hardship and scattering to fulfill His missionary purpose?

Philip preached about Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch, beginning where the Ethiopian was reading (v. 35). Why is it essential to start the Gospel conversation with the concerns, questions, or context of the listener?

APPLICATION (CONNECT, GROW, AND MULTIPLY)

Most who attend Bible Center live in the greater Charleston area. What is our Judea and Samaria?

The Holy Spirit prompted Philip to approach the chariot (v. 29). What specific prompting or "nudge" have you received recently to connect with your "one more" that you need to act on?

Philip started by preaching Christ to the eunuch, which led immediately to a question about baptism (v. 36). How does the simple, clear proclamation of the Gospel create immediate next steps for someone to *Connect* to the church and *Multiply*?

What is one specific, concise way you could explain the Gospel to a complete stranger?

8 Saul agreed with putting him to death. On that day a severe persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the land of Judea and Samaria. ² Devout men buried Stephen and mourned deeply over him. ³ Saul, however, was ravaging the church. He would enter house after house, drag off men and women, and put them in prison.

⁴ So those who were scattered went on their way preaching the word. ⁵ Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah to them. ⁶ The crowds were all paying attention to what Philip said, as they listened and saw the signs he was performing. ⁷ For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed, and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. ⁸ So there was great joy in that city.

⁹ A man named Simon had previously practiced sorcery in that city and amazed the Samaritan people, while claiming to be somebody great. ¹⁰ They all paid attention to him, from the least of them to the greatest, and they said, "This man is called the Great Power of God." ¹¹ They were attentive to him because he had amazed them with his sorceries for a long time. ¹² But when they believed Philip, as he proclaimed the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. ¹³ Even Simon himself believed. And after he was baptized, he followed Philip everywhere and was amazed as he observed the signs and great miracles that were being performed.

¹⁴ When the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. ¹⁵ After they went down there, they prayed for them so that the Samaritans might receive the Holy Spirit because He had not yet come down on any of them. ¹⁶ (They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) ¹⁷ Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸ When Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, ¹⁹ saying, "Give me this power also so that anyone I lay hands on may receive the Holy Spirit."

²⁰ But Peter told him, "May your silver be destroyed with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! ²¹ You have no part or share in this matter, because your heart is not right before God. ²² Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, your heart's intent may be forgiven. ²³ For I see you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by wickedness."

²⁴ "Pray to the Lord for me," Simon replied, "so that nothing you have said may happen to me."

²⁵ So, after they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they traveled back to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

²⁶ An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip: "Get up and go south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is the desert road.) ²⁷ So he got up and went. There was an Ethiopian man, a eunuch and high official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to worship in Jerusalem ²⁸ and was sitting in his chariot on his way home, reading the prophet Isaiah aloud.

²⁹ The Spirit told Philip, "Go and join that chariot."

³⁰ When Philip ran up to it, he heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you're reading?"

³¹ "How can I," he said, "unless someone guides me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. ³² Now the Scripture passage he was reading was this:

**He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,
and as a lamb is silent before its shearer,
so He does not open His mouth.**

**³³ In His humiliation justice was denied Him.
Who will describe His generation?
For His life is taken from the earth.**

³⁴ The eunuch said to Philip, "I ask you, who is the prophet saying this about—himself or someone else?" ³⁵ Philip proceeded to tell him the good news about Jesus, beginning with that Scripture.

³⁶ As they were traveling down the road, they

came to some water. The eunuch said, "Look, there's water. What would keep me from being baptized?" ³⁸ So he ordered the chariot to stop, and both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. ³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him any longer but went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰ Philip appeared in Azotus, and he was traveling and preaching the gospel in all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

NOTES



11. PAUL THE CONVERT

ACTS 9

OBSERVATION

What was Saul's primary motivation or activity before his encounter with Jesus (vv. 1-2)?

What was the *immediate* physical effect of Saul's encounter with Jesus (vv. 8-9)?

INTERPRETATION

Jesus says, "Why are you persecuting Me?" (v. 4). What does this statement teach us about those persecuting the church?

Ananias was hesitant to approach Saul (vv. 13-14). What does Ananias's obedience to God, despite his fear and reasonable objections, demonstrate about the nature of being led by the Holy Spirit in the mission?

APPLICATION (CONNECT, GROW, AND MULTIPLY)

This chapter is the story of how Jesus saved Saul. How did Jesus save you?

After his conversion, Saul immediately proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues (v. 20). How mature does a Christian need to be to begin sharing their faith with others?

Paul was equipped and empowered by others (Ananias and Barnabas) to enter the mission. Who are the people God has intentionally placed in your life to help you grow and equip you for ministry? Who are you called to equip?

9 Now Saul was still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord. He went to the high priest ² and requested letters from him to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any men or women who belonged to the Way, he might bring them as prisoners to Jerusalem. ³ As he traveled and was nearing Damascus, a light from heaven suddenly flashed around him. ⁴ Falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

⁵ "Who are you, Lord?" Saul said.

"I am Jesus, the One you are persecuting," He replied. ⁶ "But get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

⁷ The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the sound but seeing no one. ⁸ Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing. So they took him by the hand and led him into Damascus. ⁹ He was unable to see for three days and did not eat or drink.

¹⁰ There was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias, and the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias."

"Here I am, Lord," he replied.

¹¹ "Get up and go to the street called Straight," the Lord said to him, "to the house of Judas, and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, since he is praying there. ¹² In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and placing his hands on him so that he may regain his sight."

¹³ "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard from many people about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And he has authority here from the chief priests to arrest all who call on Your name."

¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, "Go, for this man is My chosen instrument to take My name to Gentiles, kings, and Israelites. ¹⁶ I will show him how much he must suffer for My name."

¹⁷ Ananias went and entered the house. He

placed his hands on him and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road you were traveling, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

¹⁸ At once something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he got up and was baptized. ¹⁹ And after taking some food, he regained his strength.

Saul was with the disciples in Damascus for some time. ²⁰ Immediately he began proclaiming Jesus in the synagogues: "He is the Son of God."

²¹ All who heard him were astounded and said, "Isn't this the man in Jerusalem who was causing havoc for those who called on this name and came here for the purpose of taking them as prisoners to the chief priests?"

²² But Saul grew stronger and kept confounding the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah.

²³ After many days had passed, the Jews conspired to kill him, ²⁴ but Saul learned of their plot. So they were watching the gates day and night intending to kill him, ²⁵ but his disciples took him by night and lowered him in a large basket through an opening in the wall.

²⁶ When he arrived in Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, since they did not believe he was a disciple. ²⁷ Barnabas, however, took him and brought him to the apostles and explained to them how Saul had seen the Lord on the road and that the Lord had talked to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus. ²⁸ Saul was coming and going with them in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. ²⁹ He conversed and debated with the Hellenistic Jews, but they tried to kill him. ³⁰ When the brothers found out, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

³¹ So the church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged

³² As Peter was traveling from place to place, he also came down to the saints who lived in Lydda. ³³ There he found a man named Aeneas, who was paralyzed and had been bedridden for eight years. ³⁴ Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and make your bed," and immediately he got up. ³⁵ So all who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

³⁶ In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which is translated Dorcas). She was always doing good works and acts of charity. ³⁷ About that time she became sick and died. After washing her, they placed her in a room upstairs.

³⁸ Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples heard that Peter was there and sent two men to him who urged him, "Don't delay in coming with us." ³⁹ Peter got up and went with them. When he arrived, they led him to the room upstairs. And all the widows approached him, weeping and showing him the robes and clothes that Dorcas had made while she was with them. ⁴⁰ Peter sent them all out of the room. He knelt down, prayed, and turning toward the body said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, saw Peter, and sat up. ⁴¹ He gave her his hand and helped her stand up. He called the saints and widows and presented her alive. ⁴² This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. ⁴³ Peter stayed for some time in Joppa with Simon, a leather tanner.



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12. PETER THE APOSTLE

ACTS 10

OBSERVATION

What are the two primary spiritual activities that characterized Cornelius (v. 2)?

What was Peter's main objection to the vision God gave him regarding the sheet of animals (v. 14)?

INTERPRETATION

Peter declares, "God shows no partiality" (v. 34). How does the previous chapter's story (Paul reaching the Jews/Gentiles) and this chapter's story (Peter reaching the Gentile Cornelius) demonstrate that the Gospel is truly "for all people"?

The Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles *before* they were baptized with water (vv. 44-48). What does this order of events teach the early church about the sufficiency of God's grace and the priorities of the Gospel Movement?

APPLICATION (CONNECT, GROW, AND MULTIPLY)

Peter required a divine vision to overcome his cultural bias against Gentiles. What cultural, political, or social biases are currently keeping us from *connecting* with and loving our neighbors?

Peter's vision forced him to change his deeply held cultural perspective. What deeply held belief or tradition in your own life might God be asking you to change in order to align fully with His mission?

Peter's entire sermon focused on Jesus's life, death, and resurrection (vv. 36-43). How does focusing on the entire story of Jesus, rather than just our personal experiences, enhance our ability to *Multiply* the Gospel to diverse audiences?

10 There was a man in Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment. ² He was a devout man and feared God along with his whole household. He did many charitable deeds for the Jewish people and always prayed to God. ³ About three in the afternoon he distinctly saw in a vision an angel of God who came in and said to him, "Cornelius."

⁴ Staring at him in awe, he said, "What is it, Lord?"

The angel told him, "Your prayers and your acts of charity have ascended as a memorial offering before God. ⁵ Now send men to Joppa and call for Simon, who is also named Peter. ⁶ He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea."

⁷ When the angel who spoke to him had gone, he called two of his household servants and a devout soldier, who was one of those who attended him. ⁸ After explaining everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

⁹ The next day, as they were traveling and nearing the city, Peter went up to pray on the roof about noon. ¹⁰ He became hungry and wanted to eat, but while they were preparing something, he fell into a trance. ¹¹ He saw heaven opened and an object that resembled a large sheet coming down, being lowered by its four corners to the earth. ¹² In it were all the four-footed animals and reptiles of the earth, and the birds of the sky. ¹³ A voice said to him, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat."

¹⁴ "No, Lord!" Peter said. "For I have never eaten anything impure and ritually unclean."

¹⁵ Again, a second time, the voice said to him, "What God has made clean, do not call impure."

¹⁶ This happened three times, and suddenly the object was taken up into heaven.

¹⁷ While Peter was deeply perplexed about what the vision he had seen might mean, right away the men who had been sent by Cornelius, having asked directions to Simon's house, stood at the gate. ¹⁸ They called out, asking if Simon,

who was also named Peter, was lodging there.

¹⁹ While Peter was thinking about the vision, the Spirit told him, "Three men are here looking for you. ²⁰ Get up, go downstairs, and go with them with no doubts at all, because I have sent them."

²¹ Then Peter went down to the men and said, "Here I am, the one you're looking for. What is the reason you're here?"

²² They said, "Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who has a good reputation with the whole Jewish nation, was divinely directed by a holy angel to call you to his house and to hear a message from you." ²³ Peter then invited them in and gave them lodging.

The next day he got up and set out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa went with him. ²⁴ The following day he entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵ When Peter entered, Cornelius met him, fell at his feet, and worshiped him.

²⁶ But Peter lifted him up and said, "Stand up. I myself am also a man." ²⁷ While talking with him, he went in and found a large gathering of people. ²⁸ Peter said to them, "You know it's forbidden for a Jewish man to associate with or visit a foreigner, but God has shown me that I must not call any person impure or unclean. ²⁹ That's why I came without any objection when I was sent for. So may I ask why you sent for me?"

³⁰ Cornelius replied, "Four days ago at this hour, at three in the afternoon, I was praying in my house. Just then a man in dazzling clothing stood before me ³¹ and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your acts of charity have been remembered in God's sight. ³² Therefore send someone to Joppa and invite Simon here, who is also named Peter. He is lodging in Simon the tanner's house by the sea.' ³³ So I immediately sent for you, and it was good of you to come. So now we are all in the presence of God to hear everything you have been commanded by the Lord."

³⁴ Peter began to speak: "Now I truly understand that God doesn't show favoritism, ³⁵ but in every nation the person who fears Him and does what is right is acceptable to Him. ³⁶ He sent the message to the Israelites, proclaiming the good news of peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all. ³⁷ You know the events that took place throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John preached: ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were under the tyranny of the devil, because God was with Him. ³⁹ We ourselves are witnesses of everything He did in both the Judean country and in Jerusalem, and yet they killed Him by hanging Him on a tree. ⁴⁰ God raised up this Man on the third day and caused Him to be seen, ⁴¹ not by all the people, but by us whom God appointed as witnesses, who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead.

⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that He is the one appointed by God to be the judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets testify about Him that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins."

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came down on all those who heard the message. ⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶ For they heard them speaking in tongues and declaring the greatness of God.

Then Peter responded, ⁴⁷ "Can anyone withhold water and prevent these people from being baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" ⁴⁸ He commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay for a few days.

NOTES





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