

Jesus Builds – the book of Acts

Lesson Seven | Acts 4:13-31

Background

The book of Acts was written by the physician, Luke, as a continuation of his Gospel. Jesus said he would build his church and Acts is the earliest history we have about that. It begins with the Ascension on Mount Olivet and then tracks the development of the early church with a particular focus on Peter in the early chapters and Paul in the later chapters, taking us to the early AD 60s.

Context

The events of Acts 2 took place on the Feast of Weeks (or Pentecost, meaning fifty), on Sunday, May 24, AD 33. On that day, 3,000 were added to the church. It seems the events of Acts 3 take place shortly after Acts 2, in the summer of AD 33. The events of Acts 3 – the healing of a lame man – lead to the dispute with the Jewish leadership in Acts 4. Peter and John take advantage of their opportunity before the Sanhedrin to preach Jesus. But they are threatened by the Sanhedrin and ordered not to preach Jesus.

Bible Study Tip

Write notes in your Bible.

Civil Disobedience

1. Acts 3 focuses on events related to the apostles Peter and John, shortly after the events of Acts 2. A lame man at the Beautiful Gate to the Temple was healed, setting up an opportunity for the gospel to be preached, raising the number of new believers to about 5,000 men (Acts 4:4).
2. The day after the healing / evangelism the Jewish leaders interrogated John and Peter. (Acts 4:5-7) This sets up another sermon by Peter.
3. Acts 4:8 says Peter was “filled with the Holy Spirit.”
 - What does this mean?
 - Did Peter do something to bring this about?
 - Is Peter’s experience the same as the spirit filling in Ephesians 5:18?
4. Note that Peter attributes the healing of the lame man to Jesus, preaches the death and resurrection of Jesus (Acts 4:10) and concludes his sermon by saying that salvation is exclusively available through Jesus Christ (4:12).
5. The Jewish leadership knew the lame man had been healed. (Acts 4:14-16) Why did they not believe?
6. The Jewish leadership ordered John and Peter “not to preach or teach at all in the name of Jesus.” (Acts 4:17-18)
 - When must the Christian do what the government says? (Romans 13:1-7)
 - When must the Christian disobey the government? (Acts 4:19-20)
 - When must the Christian take a stand against the government?
7. When the Christians respond to the release of Peter and John in prayer, why do they first address creation? (Acts 4:24)
8. What is the significance of their quoting from Psalm 2 in Acts 4:25-26?
9. Did the threats of the Jewish leadership stifle the Christian message? They prayed for boldness. (Acts 4:29) They prayed for God to validate their message. (4:30)
10. What was the result of the Christians being “filled with the Holy Spirit”? (Acts 4:31)