

Jesus Builds – the book of Acts

Lesson Eight | Acts 4:32-5:16

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 3 take place shortly after Acts 2, in the summer of AD 33. The healing of a lame man brought Peter and John before the Sanhedrin to answer the question, by whose authority did you heal the man? (Acts 4:7) Peter and John were instructed to stop preaching Jesus (4:18) but they refused (4:19-22). Acts 4 ends with the the church prospering despite its external threats, only to now face its first internal threat.

Bible Study Tip

Ask questions of the text.
When, where, who, how, why...
And what does it mean for me?

Who Is In Charge Of This Operation?

1. What does it mean that the “multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one mind”? Did they agree on everything? Do any families agree on everything?
2. What is the connection between Acts 4:30 and 4:33?
3. Why did the people in Acts 4:34 sell their land and homes and give the money to the church?
 - What was the heart motivation?
 - Where is the command that they give the money?
 - What was the purpose of giving the money?
 - Was it fair that some sold their land and homes and others did not? (see 2 Cor. 8-9)
 - What do you think they believed about the church?
4. Why is Barnabas mentioned in Acts 4:36 as a particular individual who sold his land and provided the money to the church? (Does Luke do this with other characters in his story?)
5. **To Give Or Not To Give:** Ananias and his wife sold a possession, kept part of the money and gave part to the church giving the impression they gave all the money.
 - Why would they lie about the money?
 - Whose idea was it to lie about the money?
 - Were they required to sell the possession or to give any amount of money?
 - Why the harsh outcome? (Recall 1 Cor. 10:1-6)
 - Should you give?
6. **Application Points:**
 - When we are not thinking Biblically, we will necessarily think in a secular / worldly manner. This is especially true of how we think about church. Ananias and Sapphires had a secular view of the church **and most Christians do.**
 - Jesus is building HIS church. (Matt. 16:18; Col. 1:18)
 - Jesus is in charge of the whole operation and where we do not correct ourselves in behavior that impacts HIS church, He will bring correction that may include death. (1 Cor. 11:17-34; Rev. 1:12-20, 2:20-2:23, 3:19)