

Abounding Grace Christian Church

The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Church – Part 19

I. Exposition of Chapter Five (continued).

A. The Church grows and the Power of God continues to be Manifested.

1. **Verse 13** – “Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly.” – Several scholars agree that this is a strange and unusual phrase.¹ Marshall expresses the sentiment of others when he writes:

“The rest is a puzzling expression, and it has been suggested that the text originally referred to the Jewish rulers, in contrast with the people mentioned in the second part of the verse. In Luke 8:10, however, the word is used of non-disciples, and it seems that it became almost a technical term for non-believers (1 Thes. 4:13; 5:6); this will be the sense here.”²

2. **“...but the people esteemed them highly.”** – It’s important to point out that though there were unbelievers who were afraid to go near the Christians, they still thought highly of them and had a level of respect for them. This was probably due to at least two factors. First, they had witnessed the power of God in both the Divine judgment upon Ananias and Sapphira and, secondly, they witnessed the signs and wonders wrought through the apostles (v. 12)
3. **Verse 14** – “And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women.” – Even though there were those who were afraid, it didn’t slow down the growth of the Church. The word “increasingly” means, “to a greater degree, even more.”³

As a result, “more and more men and women” were converted to Christ and “were added to their number” (5:14). Their fear of joining too closely to the followers of Christ did not stop them from listening to their message, and huge numbers came to faith in him.⁴

4. **Verse 15** – “[S]o that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them.”
 - a. It’s important to point out that it doesn’t actually say that anyone was healed due to falling under Peter’s shadow (though it is implied when connected with v. 16). It’s apparent, however, that at least some of the people believed it. It seems unlikely that Luke would record this if indeed people didn’t receive healing this way.

“Just his shadow as he passed by on the street to the temple, they believed, would be enough. Jesus in Luke 8:43–44 healed a woman who simply touched the tassels on his robe, and pieces of Paul’s handkerchiefs or aprons heal people in Acts 19:12. So this is not as far-fetched as we might think. Nor is it magic, for every healing produced this way was an act of God, not of Peter.”⁵

5. **Verse 16** – “Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.”
 - a. The news of miraculous healings taking place in Jerusalem was spreading fast. People began to travel from surrounding cities due to the desperate need of healing and deliverance from tormenting demons. This has always been a primary Biblical way to draw people to Christ.

“Word of what God was doing spread to the surrounding towns of Judea (the next step fulfilling Acts 1:8). Soon, because of their newfound faith, a crowd came from these towns ‘bringing their sick’ and ‘those tormented [troubled] by evil [Gk. akatharton, ‘unclean’] spirits.’ ‘All of them,’ probably including those in verse 15, were healed. This was a critical point in the history of the Church, and God did special things that demonstrated the power of the gospel and the presence of the Holy Spirit.”⁶

b. Kevin Conner adds: **“The Fear of God and the Power of God came together. Greater manifestation of the power of God upon a pure Church.”⁷**

¹See Robert James Utley, *Luke the Historian: The Book of Acts*, vol. Volume 3B, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2003), 81.

²I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 115.

³Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 687.

⁴Grant R. Osborne, *Acts: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 103–104.

⁵Ibid., 105.

⁶Stanley M. Horton, *Acts: A Logion Press Commentary* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2001), 122.

⁷Kevin J. Conner, *The Book of Acts* (Portland, OR: Bible Press, 1973), 49.

B. The Apostles arrested and Imprisoned.

1. Verse 17 – **“Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation.”**

- a. The **“high priest”** was Annas (cf. 4:6). In part 15 of this series we mentioned how the Sadducees made up the larger part of what was called the **“Sanhedrin”** (71 men) which was the senate and the supreme court of the Jews. There were also some Pharisees who had lesser authority within the Sanhedrin.

“In 4:7 only Peter and John were seized, but now it is all of the Twelve. The leadership of the followers of Jesus must be removed so that this troublesome movement is stopped once for all. The popularity of the Jesus movement has just enjoyed an unparalleled period of growth, as we have seen in the last three chapters, and now it posed a real threat to the Jewish leadership. Here the apostles incur the wrath (and jealousy) of “the high priest and all his associates,” undoubtedly the chief priests and Sadducees (see 4:1).”⁸

- b. **“...they were filled with indignation.”** – The word **“indignation”** means; **“to be hot, fervent. zeal, used in a good sense, and more often in an evil sense, meaning envy, jealousy, anger”**⁹

- 1) They were jealous, no doubt, because the Sadducees, in particular, did not believe in the Supernatural, especially the resurrection of the dead. The miracles were proving their doctrine wrong and the doctrine of the apostles, including Jesus’ resurrection to be true!
- 2) Stanley Horton adds: **“They were probably jealous also because the name of Jesus ‘rather than theirs...was being proclaimed.’”¹⁰ (cf. John 12:19).**

2. Verse 18 – **“[A]nd laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison.”** – The word **“common”** means; **“pertaining to being able to be known by the public”¹¹**

“Public’ here is actually an adverb meaning publicly. That is, this was done with a crowd looking on. Apparently the priests and Sadducees had become desperate. This time they dared to risk the disapproval of the crowds.”¹²

C. An Angel intervenes and frees the Apostles from prison.

1. Verse 19 – **“But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said...”** –

- a. The phrase, **“...an angel of the Lord...”** is used in two different ways in the Bible. In the Old Testament, it is sometimes referring to an angel meaning a **“messenger”** from God who is a created spirit being and other times the phrase is referring to God Himself as in, **Genesis 24:7, 40; Exodus 23:20–23; 32:34; Numbers 22:22; Judges. 5:23; I Samuel 24:16; Zechariah 1:19.** In the New Testament, this phrase is generally understood as referring to a created spiritual being. The only exception might be in **Acts 8:26, 29.**¹³

- b. This is one of three Divine **“jail breaks”** that Luke recorded in Acts (cf. **Peter in 12:6-11; and Paul and Silas in 16:26-27).** Also see **Hebrews 1:14** about angels.

2. Verse 20 – **“Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.”**

“The Sadducees, who did not believe in angels and ‘who believed all history was the result of human decisions...were in for a surprise.’”¹⁴

- a. The word **“stand”** means; **“to stand, “to make firm.”¹⁵** Richard Longenecker adds the meaning **“hold your ground”** and asserts:

“...suggests that dogged steadfastness on the apostles’ part was required in face of the Sadducees’ opposition.”¹⁶

- b. **“...speak to the people all the words of this life.”** – This is a very different way to describe the Gospel.

“They were to continue speaking in the temple to the people ‘the full message’ (‘all the words’) of this ‘new life,’ that is, the words that are life-giving to those who believe (see John 6:68). The gospel is more than a philosophy or a set of precepts. It, through the work of the Holy Spirit, gives life (and salvation is implied; cf. 3:19; 13:26).”¹⁷

⁸Grant R. Osborne, *Acts: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 108–109.

⁹Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, (AMG Publishers; Revised edition, 1993)

¹⁰James Boice, Acts; as quoted by Horton, *Acts.*, 123.

¹¹Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 342.

¹²Horton, *Acts.*, 123.

¹³Utley, 83.

¹⁴William J. Larkin, Jr. Quoted by Horton, *Acts.*, 123.

¹⁵Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House., 1977)

¹⁶Richard N. Longenecker, "Acts," *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 115.

¹⁷Horton, 123-124.