



Lesson 2:

The Jerusalem Church Spreads

Read Acts 3 - 5. Note: *Before you read, take a moment to pray asking God **to illumine** your mind as you study and **to incline** your heart to believably understand. Don't be in a rush--linger over the words and try to picture the scenes in your mind -- allow your heart to become engaged with the real people in this wonderful story.*

1. **In Acts 3:1- 10**, Luke records a story as confirming evidence that the invisible gift of the Holy Spirit came with gifts that would make visible the continuance of Christ's ministry. Be prepared to discuss this miracle and what significance it holds for the church and the world.
2. Read **Acts 3:11 - 26**. What lesson do you think Luke is teaching by emphasizing that Peter did not stand around drop jawed and amazed but immediately began to preach to the gathering crowd?
3. (**Digging Deeper**) Peter builds this sermon around 5 illuminating divine names. Beside each one, suggest what he was teaching by using each name.
 - **God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers** (see Exodus 4:5) –
 - **His servant Jesus** (see Isaiah 52:13-53:12) –
 - **Holy One** (see Isaiah 41:14, Isaiah 43:15)
 - **Righteous One** (see Proverbs 21:12, 1 John 2:1-2) –
 - **Author of Life** (see Deuteronomy 32:6, John 1:3, Colossians 1:16)
4. Which verse pinpoints the "*secret*" of the beggar's healing? Share thoughts concerning the implications of this verse for your own life.
5. What appeal to the audience does Peter make in this sermon? What promises does he hold out to them?

Note: *The healing and the sermon disturbed the religious leaders of Jerusalem. The 71 member Sanhedrin (the Jewish Supreme Court), made up of two parties – the Pharisees and the Sadducees-- met to deal with the disturbance. This Council was made up of the same men who just months earlier had been the ones to call for Jesus' crucifixion – surely they had hoped they could silence Jesus forever.*

6. **Read Acts 4:1 - 22.** What was the specific charge that causes Peter and John to be thrown into jail? Describe the ways you see these powerful men of the Sanhedrin in actuality being very powerless.

7. **Read Acts 4:23 - 31.** Following their release, Peter and John gathered with the other believers and began to pray. Consider each phrase of the prayer and why these words would be pouring forth from their hearts. Which phrases seem to steady your heart as you read them? Why?

8. What thoughts run through your mind as you consider **verse 31-36**? What truth do you find concerning the outcome of times of persecution?

9. **Read Acts 5:1 - 11.** If I were compiling a church history, this might be one part of the account that I would leave out. Since Luke included it, what lessons do you think he wanted us to learn? What questions does this incident raise for you?

10. While Satan was busy attacking the church from within and without, Luke inserts a few verses to tell the readers what was also going on in the church. Share what you find encouraging from **Acts 5:12-16**.

11. **Read Acts 5:17 - 42.** What method does God use in this account to make sure the “full message of this new Life” is not jailed? What verses would you say contain that “full message?”

12. Someone has said that *“fear and denial are characteristic of those who oppose Christ.”* How do you see that phrase fulfilled in this account? What did God use to set the messengers free this time?

13. Look back over the chapters in this lesson and describe some of the undeniable signs of the empowering work of the Holy Spirit.

Scripture study is like a treasure hunt – what gem have you discovered and treasured from this lesson?