



Acts of the Apostles
A DEEP DIVE INTO THE BOOK OF ACTS.

WEEK 3
 CLASS BY PASTOR GLYN NORMAN

Acts – Lecture 3

Acts 2:42-47 A Thesis Paragraph on the Early Church In Jerusalem

One of three short summary statements about the early church. The other two are: 4:32-35 and 5:12-16.

- devoted – steadfast commitment
- the apostles' teaching – a body of material considered authoritative probably containing:
 - a compilation of the words of Jesus (cf. 20:35)
 - an account of his earthly ministry, passion and resurrection (cf. 2:22-24)
 - a declaration of what this meant for humankind's redemption (cf. 1 Cor. 15:3-5)

and became a tradition (*paradosis*) that could be passed on to others (cf. 1 Cor. 11:2; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Thess 2:15, 3:6)

- the creative use of prophecy in the early church was balanced by the conserving role of teaching
- breaking of bread
 - 1. a Jewish fellowship (love) meal, not connected to the death of Christ? or
 - 2. a type of communion as we know it, remembering Christ's death
 - Luke places this description between “religiously loaded” terms of “the fellowship” and “prayer” so perhaps it did have more of a sacred feel to it, than just a meal together
- prayer
 A parallelism between the role of prayer in the ministry of Jesus, and the role of prayer in the ministry of the early church.
- held in awe by the people
- communal living and sharing
 - as a result of economic and social sanctions? Both “real estate” and possessions in common.



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Acts 3:1-4:4 A Crippled Beggar Healed, Peter and John Arrested

- 2:42-47 mentions continued attendance at the temple, the wonders and miracles the apostles did, the awe as a result, and the apostles' teaching. Now this story illustrates these four elements:
- they continue to attend the temple, obviously seeing some continuity with Judaism and not feeling that attendance at the temple is incompatible with Christianity.
- almsgiving was a meritorious act, so people could "gain the favor of God" on their way to temple by giving to the beggar
- what's in a name? A name communicates not just identity, but also the essence of a person (so Cephas became Peter, "the rock") The power of the risen Jesus together with the man's faith is sufficient for him to walk.

DISCUSS:

Peter's ministry was holistic. It dealt both with the person's immediate need, and then went on to proclaim the gospel. How balanced is your church in this regard? Are they all about meeting needs, or all about preaching? Is there a balance?

People often come to Christ because of their needs, but stay because it is the truth.

Is this statement true?

- a joyous response (see Isa 35:6 – "Then will the lame leap like a deer.")
- an awareness of the possibility of God acting, even in the midst of their everyday behavior.

DISCUSS:

Examine 3:12,13; 10:26 and 14:14-15. What attitude is shown here?

(Peter makes a serious effort to deflect the glory from himself and to God (3:12,13).) Is this a feature of most ministries? What has been your experience? Does the minister talk about himself and his achievements, or about God and what God has done?



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Acts 3:11-26 Peter's sermon in Solomon's Colonnade

- similar to the earlier sermon at Pentecost, with the pattern of proclamation and a call to repentance
- a more generous attitude towards Israel (v17) – (“acted in ignorance”; God willed it to fulfill the words of the prophets) probably than anywhere else in the New Testament

v12-16 – the proclamation part of the sermon:

- a denial that it was by their own power of godliness

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- a focus on God's servant Jesus whom Israel disowned and killed, but whom God raised from the dead – he is the one that has healed
- God as the author of true miracles (see 2:22) – just as miracles were done by God through Jesus to accredit him to the people, so miracles continue to be done to glorify Jesus.
- titles for Jesus – God's servant, the Holy One, the Righteous One, a prophet like Moses, the name

v17-21 – very positive towards Israel; they acted in ignorance as did their leaders, they may repent, they may help to usher in the end-times

v22-26 – definition of the group in relation to Israel's great leaders of the past

- the Jewish heritage of the group clearly marked out, so that the continuity is clear i.e. this is not something new, heretical and sectarian, it is the natural development of what our own prophets foretold – “heirs of the prophet and of the covenant.”

4:1-4 – The arrest of Peter and John

- the first appearance of Peter and John before the Sanhedrin (Jewish high court)
- early opposition to the preaching of the gospel, from the priestly and Sadducean ranks



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- their concerns:
 - Peter and John were teaching the people, but this was the role of the priests – a threat to the status quo and their power base
 - rallying public support and thereby challenging their authority
 - proclaiming the resurrection which the Sadducees didn't believe.
- the church grows to 5000.

(Most of these notes from: R. Longenecker, "Acts" in *Expositors Bible Commentary*, Vol.9)