

Expansions on the Acts of the Apostles

Introduction

Before undertaking the task at hand I blew by several friends my intent to consider the Acts of the Apostles through the lens of *lectio divina*. All I wanted was to get their opinion. The response? As soon as they heard it was Acts of the Apostles, they cast both a penetrating and quizzical glance at me which revealed their surprise as well as displeasure. Actually they did this without uttering a single word. I'd sum it up as a gesture saying "good luck to you" which made say to myself, why did I bother to ask?

"Yes, why" is precisely what I thought shortly afterwards. To anyone engaged in the professional practice of religion such as the monastic life, scripture has become very familiar. It's an inescapable, day or night. As for my friends, they were simply reflecting this jaded attitude which in essence is an occupational hazard. As someone who had spent a few months in a monastic community many years ago put it, "Never have I been read at so much."

Indeed, putting up with the same readings as they occur day after day, month after month, year after year poses a special challenge. While by default you may find yourself quite knowledgeable of scripture, the downside is that you can wake up one day finding that you're not living by its principles. Most of the time this insight doesn't come on you at once but gradually, and when it does, it hits you like a ton of un-welcomed bricks. As for Acts of the Apostles, basically it's a historical document loaded with invaluable information about the early church. On the surface it doesn't lend itself so much for *lectio divina* as is the case with the Psalter, prophets and even the books of Samuel and Kings. Along with the reading of Acts year after year as during the lengthy Easter season this contributes to a deadening effect many of us experience but are reluctant to admit. Such an attitude is mirrored by my friends' response noted above. However, it doesn't have to be this way should you take the time to look more closely. Yes, it all comes down to a matter of how to look. Hopefully the document at hand contributes in a small way to a look that's favorable.

As time went on yet before I set myself to the task at hand, I became more intrigued as to the nature of this deadening feeling and wanted to probe more deeply into what it consisted of. It creeps up on you gradually and almost defies explanation. I've heard a number of good people say over the years that as soon as they hear Acts being read, their minds go elsewhere. This is a self-

preservation mechanism that kicks in on its own accord and is more common than we admit. Clearly it needs to be faced and had a lot to do with prompting the creation of this document. Is there something hidden away in some unknown cranny which can relive this listlessness? Yes, most definitely. In addition to approaching Acts in the spirit of *lectio divina*, if possible, not only look at the text in the original Greek but exercise considerable patience as you search carefully for clues here and there. This is hard on one hand yet on the other, easy to do. Once you get into the swing of things, you uncover riches everywhere.

Another point to consider with regard to Acts of the Apostles is the very word *praxis* as used in the title itself. We're all familiar with how it's used in English, that is, action or perhaps better, practice. The Greek term is more along the lines of this practice as sustained activity. Indeed, "sustained" fits the bill because what we see is a constant flow of activity which begins with Luke speaking of the "first book" or his Gospel account of Jesus' activity. From there it carries us along through the eastern half of the Mediterranean world until we're deposited along with Paul in Rome. In other words, Luke doesn't effectively complete his "first book" but allows it to continue into the one at hand. Thus technically Acts isn't a second book but Part Two of his Gospel. Anyway, an interesting observation in light of how Luke presents himself consciously or otherwise. This sense too can be applied to any follow-up Luke may have had in mind after having composed Acts of the Apostles.

One key to unlock his almost magical-mystical hidden reality right there in plain sight is through the use of prepositions. This holds true whether they be they free-standing or prefaced to nouns and verbs. They give a subtle variation quite difficult to translate. Besides, a document like Acts is chock full on them. For this reason many if not most are singled out here for consideration. Once you see the role they play, voila. The door is open. Such is one among several possibilities at hand. If others are out there, I'd certainly love to know about them.

Because Acts of the Apostles is a historical document and is valuable insofar as it describes the establishment of the new religion eventually to be called Christianity, nevertheless there is room for reading it in the spirit of *lectio divina*. Such is the sole intent of the document at hand. The *lectio* approach holds up just fine roughly up unto around the middle of Chapter Twenty. There Paul summons the elders of Ephesus to inform them of his intent to go to Jerusalem. They and others object, fearful for his safety because the Jews there

want to kill him. And so Paul does go to Jerusalem oblivious to any and all objections so characteristic of his bull-headedness. Once there, he's attacked as expected but protected by the Roman authorities by reason of him being a citizen of the empire. From this point on to the end of Acts in Chapter Twenty-Eight we have a series of events...almost a travelogue...with one event following on the heels of the previous one. That means little or no room is available for the *lectio* approach.

One final note as to the approach at hand, if you will. This document is not to be read as a series of observations on Acts of the Apostles. Rather, it focus upon elements of the text as a means leading to rest in God. Once we do that we return in a spontaneous fashion and repeat the process again. This can be done as often as we wish without a desire to "get through" Acts and move on to something else. That's why the text may come across as a bit jerky beside being written in a rather unprofessional manner.

Frequently the same words occur. After they've been spelled out as for the first time, in other occasions they're simply pointed out. This, of course, is to avoid unnecessary repetition. It should be kept in mind that the same word can have a different meaning due to the context. This too will be noted. Also please note that on occasion a scriptural verse from the Hebrew text is inserted to contrast it with the one cited in Acts. Most of the time these citations are taken from other documents posted on this home page.

As with all documents on this homepage, the English translation found throughout is from **The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha (RSV)**, New York, 1973. Also reference is made to **The NIV Study Bible**, Grand Rapids, 1984. The Greek critical text is from **The Greek New Testament**, Stuttgart 1968.

Please note: for some reason or other the consecutive number of footnotes throughout the document is not in proper order, that is, the document taken as a whole. It seems to be a software issue. However, the first part appears fine. At least the footnotes are where they should be, not out of order.

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Chapter One

The nice part about Acts is that right away it starts with the first person singular. Luke himself is addressing the reader which serves to put him or her at ease and ready to listen to what he has to say more readily than if he chose another format. *Logos* or book refers to the Gospel he composed in comparison with *biblos* as in the beginning of Matthew's Gospel. This is significant for a basically historical text such as Acts, endowing it with a certain spiritual authority which the reader will find welcoming as he or she advances through it. So when we hear *logos*, right away we're primed to associate it with Jesus-as-the-Logos or Word. Thus from the get-go use of this word attunes us to consider the post-resurrection period leading to Pentecost and beyond as being related directly to the Logos or Jesus Christ. And so Luke provides us with another way for the text to become more personal.

With regard to Luke's Gospel, at the beginning he uses the noun *diegesis* translated as narrative or better, an orderly description of facts where the preposition *dia* as through supports this definition. Thus Luke as author is responsible for two documents intended to be read as one. Another way of putting it is that we have *diegesis* followed by *logos*. It should be noted that the other Gospels lack this distinct character. The authors jump right in with the narrative in the way they feel best to present it. No problem there. As for Luke, we have the double advantage of two texts by the same author where each of the two words set their own tone and pace thereby endowing the text with a more appealing character.

The verb which has *logos* as its object is the common *poieo*, to do or to make in the sense of to fashion. Luke gets right to the point. He "fashions" this *logos* which concerns everything not with regard to what Jesus had done and taught (*poieo* again with *didasko*). Instead, he focuses upon all that Jesus began to do and to teach, *archo* here in the sense of initiating an action. It seems that Luke is attempting to get a behind the scenes glimpse of this *poieo* and *didasko* in order to obtain a better appreciation of what Jesus intended by both. Obviously he's off to a good start with his text-as-*logos*. Also *archo* bears a similarity with the Gospel account, especially that of John, as suggesting a whole series of events which are to follow. Surely Luke had in mind Jesus-as-Logos opening the book or *logos* at hand. As for the person Luke is addressing, the **RSV** has a footnote saying it's Theophilus, He could be a Roman official or any lover of God which is the definition of this proper name.

The verb *archo* as to begin is a kind of lead-in to the first word of the next verse, the two verses forming one extended sentence. That word is *archi*, an adverb of

place and translated as “until,” also “as far as.” So from *archo* to *archi* there’s a significant gap of time with respect to the ministry of Jesus. Better still, *archi* applies beyond the day when he was taken up, *analambano*. Emphasis is upon an outside source or from someone else, if you will, not Jesus in and by himself as attributed with this action. The text obviously suggests an agent greater or equal to him, certainly not less (i.e., the Father).

As for *analambano*, it refers to his ascension and afterwards when, as the text puts it, Jesus “had given commandment” to the apostles which Luke is careful to identify as those whom he had chosen, *eklego*.¹ The verb here is *entello* which has an air of authority and is done is through the Holy Spirit (*Pneuma*). This seems to differ from being filled (*pleroo* connotes completeness) with the same *Pneuma* at Pentecost (cf. 2.4). Thus *entello* is external or from Jesus to the apostles compared with *pleroo* which is internal or from the Holy Spirit to the apostles. While the latter is described as external though *kathistemi* or to rest upon in 2.3, it has a sense of permeation.

In vs. 2 we have *apostolos*, one-who-is-sent, compared with disciple or *mathetes* or one-engaged-in learning. Use of *apostolos* suggests that Luke is more concerned with those who will be responsible for establishing an organization unknown to them at this juncture. It will go by the name of *ekklesia* which derives from the verbal root *kaleo* or to summon prefaced with the preposition *ek* or from. Actually *ekklesia* doesn’t make its appearance until 5.11 or when it got more established as a way to describe the original Jewish concept of *qahal*. In other words, the disciples, ten of whom had deserted the Lord and one who had betrayed him, are gathered in what must have been an awkward situation. Should they stay or should they bolt? As far as they’re concerned, being called *apostolos* or *mathetes* is pretty much irrelevant at this point.² They’re more interested in saving their own skins.

Vs. 3 begins a long, extended verse running through vs. 5 beginning with Jesus manifesting himself to the apostles after his resurrection. Instead of focus upon a visible manifestation commonly understood we have the verb *paristemi*, literally to place-beside or *para*. It has nothing directly to do with vision or even hearing. Rather, it’s more along the lines of a being-with or better, a being-beside with respect to those with whom Jesus wishes to establish a relationship. If this is applicable to the apostles, chances are almost certain it will be applicable to future members of the *ekklesia*. As for *paristemi*, it’s accompanied

¹The NIV puts it as “after having given instructions.”

²The word *mathetes* or disciples doesn’t appear again until 6.1.

by the participle form of *zao*, to be alive. This indicates that *paristemi* is not a vision which is static and fabricated. Something alive can't be forced into what is devoid of life. Actually the *paristemi* which is living is bound up with those incidents when Jesus met the apostles after his passion. Here the infinitive of *pascho* or to suffer is used, not the resurrection, which seems to be presumed. Thus *pascho* as having involved Christ's death is contrasted with him as *zao*.

Jesus does this *paristemi* literally "in many signs," *tekmerion* or proof which is in the plural. Luke just mentions them; he doesn't spell them out, considering it enough to state this fact. In addition to *paristimi* Jesus appears to the apostles, *optanomai* being a lesser used verb meaning to be seen. While visible, Jesus speaks of the kingdom of God compared with the alternative, kingdom of heaven. This he had done numerous times though now it is quite different in the sense of being more present. We could say that while speaking with them, he is this kingdom, so in a way all he has to do is be there...*para* + *histemi*...and not utter a word about it. Nothing is recorded as to the details, for most likely the apostles remained just as ignorant as they had been earlier. At least they were armed with the basics of Jesus' teachings so as to prepare themselves for the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The interim thus consists of an alteration between *optanomai* and *lego* or appearing and speaking.

Vs. 4 begins with the verb *sunalizo* which can be translated two ways, to stay together as well as to eat together, the verbal root being *halizo* also to muster prefaced with the preposition *sun* or with. In sum, it intimates that Jesus remained quite a while with the apostles, not just drop in and leave with the alacrity of an angel. During one such extended stay or towards the end of his physical association with his apostles he charges them rather sternly, *paraggello* being the verb whose root *aggello* means to proclaim prefaced with the preposition *para* or beside, this giving a greater sense of urgency.

They are not to leave Jerusalem, *chorizo* inferring not just to depart but to separate themselves from the capital. Instead, all—and that accounts for eleven apostles in number—are to await the Father's promise. These are difficult words which can't but make the apostles aware of the walls surrounding Jerusalem and squeezing them in. As it turns out, Philip is the only disciple who left the confines of the city (cf. 8.5) when he went to Samaria. The biggest threat within these walls are the Jewish authorities and Romans who had put Jesus to death. The last thing in the world they wanted was to remain there. Jesus knew this yet didn't budge an inch as to telling them how long they'd be holed up.

Their task was the most difficult of them all...to wait...the verb being *parameno* which has the preposition *para* or beside prefaced to the root meaning to remain.

Thus *parameno* is a different kind of waiting, more like being ready to receive beside oneself something or to receive someone you may not have proper information about. Jesus presents this in a way which seems to the apostles as something vague and indefinite, a promise or *epaggelia* belonging to the Father. This noun also means a declaration to do something under obligation thereby giving it more urgency. Hopefully it will occur shortly. *Epaggelia* has one Gospel reference similar to its use here, Lk 44.49: “And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.” Since Luke is author of both his Gospel and Acts, we can assume that the apostles took comfort in how Jesus fleshed out his meaning of this word. As for this promise, Luke quotes from Jesus who tells his apostles that they had heard literally “of me.” His words continue through the next verse.

Vs. 5 brings to an end the extended sentence begun with vs. 3 and has as its first word *hoti* translated as “for” in reference to John whom Luke says had baptized with water. He contrasts it with the apostles who will be baptized with the Holy Spirit or the *Pneuma* which is *hagios*. That is to say, two dippings or immersions are contrasted through the verb *baptizo*. And so Jesus’ words conclude as recorded by Luke which echoes those in his Gospel with John saying “I baptize you with water; but he who is mightier than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire” [3.16]. The major difference between the two verses is that in the former the Holy Spirit is mentioned alone whereas in the latter, fire is added to the baptism the apostles will receive. Still, this remains confusing language they were incapable of processing at the moment but enough to give them hope so as not to leave Jerusalem. Perhaps if Jesus hadn’t spoken as such, all would have bolted by now. It would be the same if not worse as when they so recently deserted him upon his arrest.

Though Jesus’ mother isn’t mentioned until Pentecost, we could say that the apostles gently yet firmly requested that she not be present with them. Though it’s her son who’s appearing to them, their questions and concerns might come across as too contentious for her who so recently was by him on Calvary. She knew of Jesus’ resurrection, to be sure, though there’s no account of him dealing with her as we might expect. Again, that would be too much. Besides, on the cross Jesus entrusted Mary to the beloved disciples meaning her focus needs to

shift from her son to the *ekklesia* or assembly, no easy task. However, John was up to the task, she most likely giving him a good amount of information that now comprises his Gospel.

As for that assembly or *ekklesia*, it will be influenced by the Holy Spirit which Mary now recalls after so many years. That is to say, what the angel Gabriel had told her (cf. Lk 1.36), namely, that this same Spirit will come upon her and the power of the Most High will overshadow her. The verb *eperchomai* (come upon) prefaced with *epi* (upon) has another *epi* giving two instances of this preposition. Combine this with yet a third *epi* as in *episkiazo* and you have a protection which is threefold. For Mary such protection makes the passage from that time until now seem as nothing. In sum we have the outline:

eperchomai → *epi* → *episkiazo*

It prepares her in a unique way for a fourth *epi* of the Spirit's descent or upon the apostles. Mary isn't mentioned as present with them. She simply has no need for it since already she has this *eperchomai epi* and *episkiazo*. Thus we could say that she's watching as a knowing participant.

In vs. 6 the apostles—again using that word since “disciple” doesn't appear until 6.1—came together but at an unspecified time, the verb being *sunerchomai* (*sun* or with). The way the verse presents it, we could say that Jesus is already present, referring to *paristemi* in vs. 3 though it isn't used. The interaction is straightforward, indicative of the disciples still not getting it when they ask Jesus about something they've already been taught. That consists in renewing the kingdom to Israel. Note the words “at this time” or at this *chronos* implying conventional time where two fundamental courses of action are anticipated, being freed from the Roman yoke and a new age when God will reign upon the earth. The verb is *apokathistemi* which pertains to changing to an earlier state or condition, *histemi* being the verbal root or to stand prefaced with two prepositions, *apo* and *kata* or from and according to. Jesus will do this *apokathistemi* but in a way that won't become evident as the apostles desire. He has to wait until much later or until immediate expectations of his physical return are exchanged for a return belonging to the spiritual order. Israel in and by itself will not be as central as commonly believed to this restoration though certainly will be included. It will be more as occupying the place of first-born followed by countless brothers and sisters grafted on.

The answer the eleven got was disappointing. Jesus didn't come off with a clear-cut yes or no but altered the context of the question. They haven't been granted insight to know times or seasons, the verb *ginosko* also implying close or intimate knowledge. Thus his response took the form of a rebuke which embarrassed them to a certain degree. Jesus speaks of two types of time found frequently throughout the New Testament, *chronos* and *kairos* or conventional time and season which is a nice way the **RSV** puts it. The latter isn't tied down to clock-time but is more inclusive. It can be either more specific in the sense of right now or more expansive and inclusive. In other words, *kairos* is very flexible and must have not gone down well with the apostles keen on wanting to nail down a specific time in the sense of *chronos*.

Jesus continues to speak not of his Father but the Father. They, of course, heard plenty about this Father throughout Jesus' ministry, especially in the time before his arrest, the Last Supper. It'd come as no surprise that they were embarrassed with this talk, for they don't understand Jesus now just as they had failed to do earlier. So when Jesus speaks of *chronos* and *kairos* exclusively as belonging to the Father's authority or *exousia*, both are way out of their grasp. The verb *tithemi*, to set or to place relative to the Father's authority makes sure of this. So while this remains beyond the apostles' comprehension, it won't be as such for long. In a short time they will learn about it with the descent of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus continues in vs. 8 beginning with the important *alla* or "but." The reason? He realizes what he had just said might be too much for the eleven and wishes to modify his words. To balance off what can seem an almost dictatorial *exousia* or authority of the Father Jesus speaks of *dunamis* or power. The apostles are to receive it, parallel to though not as authoritative as *exousia*. Nevertheless it pertains to the capacity to carry out something they are to receive in the future, the time being indeterminate but very soon and related to the Holy Spirit. This Spirit or *Pneuma* will come upon them, *eperchomai* which has the preposition *epi* or upon prefaced to it along with another *epi* ('upon you'). Thus we have two "upons." Nothing could be better than that which the apostles will realize.

While at first the indefinite double *epi* isn't specified in accord with the apostles' liking, if they pay attention more closely to what Jesus is saying the situation isn't as desperate. As noted with regard to vs. 4 when Jesus told them not to leave the confines of Jerusalem, now he tells them that they will be his witnesses or *martus* there. In other words, they don't have to go far, just literally step outside the door. Jesus has in mind, of course, Jerusalem as being the

source of this *martus*. It's to extend locally to Judea and Samaria after which he throws in the entire world or more to the point, the *eschatos* or very end...extreme...of the *ge*, a noun referring to inhabited places. When you stop and take this into consideration, it's more perhaps than the apostles could bargain for. They may have thought Jesus was exaggerating. Okay for Judea and Samaria, a stone's throw from Jerusalem, but the world's furthest boundaries as implied by *eschatos*? Upon hearing these words the eleven must have looked at each other in disbelief and then let out a spontaneous laugh at how ridiculous Jesus' words sounded to them. In essence he's asking them to go to the edge of the known world. However, they wouldn't be in danger of falling off.

Vs. 9 has two verbs (present participle) with regard to the words Jesus had just uttered or in a way, continues to utter. They are *eipon* and *blepon* or saying and looking, one right after the other. Tied in with this twofold action—the former with regard to Jesus and the latter with regard to the apostles—some force or power suddenly intervenes and takes Jesus away, *epairo* which is the root *airo* with the preposition *epi* or upon prefaced to it. Obviously this is reminiscent of Elijah who “went up by a whirlwind into heaven” [2Kg 2.11]. Instead of a chariot of fire and horses, a cloud is the vehicle which lifted Jesus from among his apostles, *hupolambano*. So while *epairo* is a taking-upon, *hupolambano* is a taking from-under or *hupo*, a kind of scooping-up action. “From their eyes” means, of course, that Jesus was no longer visible.

As for this twofold ascension, no details are given. Keeping in mind this text, we can refer to the end of Luke's Gospel which speaks rather vaguely of Jesus' ascension: “He parted from them and was carried up into heaven” [24.51]. Here the verbs are *diisthmi* and *anaphero* with regard to *eis* or into heaven. The former implies separation (*dia* or through prefaced to *histemi* or to stand) through movement whereas the latter, a taking up-to or upon, *ana*. The three prepositions may be outlined as follows:

dia→*ana*→*eis* (through→upon→into)

And so the presence of Jesus in Acts pertains to him before the ascension though the two accounts are essentially the same. Acts has Jesus ascending from the context of the eleven gathered together in Jerusalem. As for Luke's Gospel, Jesus is ascending from Bethany. The difference is simply a matter of emphasis. If we stick with the band going to Bethany (cf. Lk 24.50), there comes to mind that it's home to Martha, Mary and Lazarus. That means they too

could have witnessed Jesus' ascension. Given that not long ago Jesus brought Lazarus back to life, of all present he'd have the clearest sense of what's going on.

Vs. 10 has a somewhat humorous air about it, that is, the apostles find themselves transfixed as they gaze at Jesus. The verb is *atenizo* or better, to stare, alpha privative prefaced to the verbal root *teino*, to extend, to look without extension. This was transpiring the same time Jesus was leaving, *poreuo* to go or to carry over. At the same time two men...who knows...they could be angels in the disguise as men are present (*paristemi*, to stand beside) and are clothed in white which is suggestive of their angelic nature. We don't know if they had materialized before Jesus ascended or were present all along, just that they weren't visible. Their function was to snap the bewildered apostles from their being *atenes* or without extension, if you will. The two addressed the eleven as men of Galilee in order to bring them back to reality followed by a rhetorical question as to why they're looking into heaven. The verb *blepo* is along the lines of having the faculty of sight compared with the lack-of-extension just noted. We can just imagine the apostles with head tossed way back and fixed that way unable to move.

When the eleven came to their senses, the two men...angels...revealed something Jesus hadn't communicated to them. That is to say, he will return the exact same way as they saw him leave. *Tropos* also can be taken as way or means and the verb *theaomai* as perceiving something which is above and beyond what the eye takes in. So if Jesus is taken up or *analambano*, he will descend precisely as such. That means *analambano* will be followed by a *katabaino*. *Tropos* as representing the means suggests that the apostles are to pay close attention to all the elements of Jesus' ascension. It will be important when dealing with future members of the church because as we know from historical records, they're close to being obsessed upon how and when Jesus will return. Nothing is said if Jesus' ascent happened at once, gradually or even like Elijah. However, *atenizo* suggests that it was sudden, this verb again referring to what happens without extension relative to space and time.

Once this event had transpired, the apostles recalled Jesus having bade them to remain in Jerusalem. That means they hurried back as quickly as possible, leaving Martha, Mary and Lazarus behind somewhat taken aback. The two angels or men realized this, so they decided to remain in order in order to fill them in with the necessary details. All this was relatively brief. If the men clad in white were angels, we can be sure that true to form, they left quickly. Their

very nature is to impart messages in a concise, accurate fashion. In this way the have fulfilled their mission and ascended in the same way as Jesus if not with greater speed. Once back home, they joined their fellow heavenly beings in anticipation of any future mission. Obviously they were focused on the Holy Spirit getting ready to descend.

Vs. 12 says in rather bland fashion that the apostles returned (*hupostrepho*) literally into Jerusalem from mount Olivet. Luke's Gospel has them in Bethany, pretty much in the same place, the southern slope of Olivet. Although they hastened to return, they must have paused a while to gaze at the magnificent temple and walls of the city. To them it paled in comparison to what moments ago they had witnessed. Now they were entering the confined area of Jerusalem at Jesus' command far less afraid of the Jews and Romans who might be after them. This journey is described as a Sabbath's day, very close, which suggests that Jesus did ascend on that sacred day of the week. We can assume that the apostles must have talked little if at all. What on earth could any one of them say after such an amazing event? Would that the two men...angels...had accompanied them. All this was intended for their instruction though they were unable to grasp it, feeling pretty much like orphans.

Vs. 13 has the apostles staying in an upper room, a place of assembly they had been using which means it had to be large enough to accommodate them all let alone visitors coming and going. Perhaps it consists of a series of rooms, more like the entire floor of an apartment. Being above the street means it had a psychological advantage, better than being on the ground floor and away from prying eyes. The next verse takes pains to take an assessment of sorts, that is, it mentions all eleven apostles. One, of course, was missing which meant a substitute had to be found. Nevertheless, vs. 14 points out that those present were of one accord, *proskartereo*. This is an interesting verb whose root *krateo* means to be strong or powerful prefaced with two prepositions, *pros* and *kata* or direction towards-which and in accord. It's a kind of tight word to describe the unity all enjoyed or perhaps better put, were forced to adopt in order to survive. Interestingly and to their credit, any one or all of them could have dribbled away from Jerusalem and return to their former way of living. No questions asked. While within the realm of possibility, each would be scorn from their families whom they summarily abandoned about three years ago. Being caught between a rock and a hard place hit home like nothing else.

Homothumodon is another interesting word, an adverb consisting of the root *thumos*, intense expression or desire prefaced with *homos*, one and the same. To

be unified with respect to *thumos* indeed represents a very strong bond, again, something desperately needed given the current circumstance. What makes it even more powerful is that it's directed toward prayer, *proseuche* fundamentally as making intercession. The eleven weren't alone. Fortunately they were joined by some unidentified women, especially Mary the mother of Jesus and his brothers or extended family. Obviously all couldn't fit into the upper room regardless of spread out it happened to be. This, however, didn't prevent visitors bringing various supplies, etc. in discreet intervals.

The eleven informed these good people about Jesus having ascended into heaven and bade them to remain in Jerusalem. Still, the lack of a specific time frame must have been unnerving. As for Mary, there's no indication that her son had singled her out for special consideration with regard to all this. She was in the place to which Jesus had entrusted her from the cross, in the bosom of her new son, the incipient church. In retrospect this sounds great, but given the situation, to be sure it was very painful. As for any comings and goings, all these people had to be careful, the religious authorities and Romans being on the look out. Nevertheless, the way events are presented show that this never became a problem.

The phrase "in those days" beginning vs. 15 is significant not so much for what follows but for what has not been said. Even before being filled with the Holy Spirit Peter is demonstrating a new-found boldness so necessary to lead the budding church. The phrase also brings to mind the tense time when the apostles were assembled in the upper room and when Jesus' mother along with all sorts of sympathizers were coming and going. Despite the ever present threat of being discovered, all who participated must have looked back at a later time and saw in it the church-as-it-can-be. In other words, it was a model not so much to be replicated...impossible and not desirable...but one as a kind of template.

During the period of time signified by "in those days" Peter didn't just stand but stood up (*anistemi* as to rise). He did so in the very midst or *mesos* of those assembled called brothers, *adelphos* suggestive of a common or better, a united outlook. These brothers are called by the sometimes less ceremonious term *ochlos* which suggests a fairly substantial amount of people, the number being one-hundred and twenty. It's substantial insofar as such short a time between Jesus' death, resurrection and the present moment. Peter then addresses them literally as "men brothers," *aner* and *adelphos*. There must have been a short but pregnant interval between Peter standing up and speaking. He did this

spontaneously not so much to the surprise of the apostles (they were accustomed to his impetuosity) but to others present who knew him having shown cowardly behavior when he abandoned the Lord. Peter, of course, was fully aware of this but knew he had to proceed by reason of the commission Jesus had bestowed on him some time ago as the rock on which he'll build his church. It was no small feat balancing these two not just now but for the rest of his life.

Being a devout Jew, it was natural for Peter to refer to scripture which he does now. However, both he and those present were surprised not so much at his confidence in speaking but his knowledge of scripture. Obviously such knowledge wasn't acquired but infused. Peter begins by referring to Judas who had betrayed Jesus, not an easy thing to do. Such authority to date was unheard of even though the apostles recall having heard Jesus speak of his betrayal. The apostles especially cringed while hearing Peter go on, feeling the eyes of everyone else upon them for having allowed such a thing to happen. After all, Judas had been in their company for some three years, and here were his associates who were completely clueless. Peter was aware of this association which is partly why he speaks of scripture as having reached completion, *pleroo*. Also he was deft enough to speak openly of how Judas was counted as one of theirs, *katharithmeo*, the preposition *kata* suggestive of a given order. Not only that, Judas was given a share in the common ministry. The verb is *lagchano* or to obtain with *kleros* (also as a lot which is cast) and *diakonia* indicative of service rendered in an intermediate capacity.

Peter continues to speak of Judas in vs. 18 without mentioning his proper name. Instead he uses "this man" with a disgust that was barely disguised and goes on to describe how he had bought a field with the thirty pieces of silver given by the Jewish authorities for having handed over Jesus to them. Peter calls it "the reward of his wickedness," *misthos* and *adikia*, the latter more along the lines of unrighteousness. He doesn't hesitate to use vivid, even distasteful language as to how Judas' bowels spilled out when he fell flat on his face. However, he doesn't mention the exact details of how Judas had committed suicide. Enough of that.

Finally Peter gets to associating Judas with the fulfillment of scripture by citing two verses from the Psalter which he jams together. The first is Ps 69.25 which according to the Hebrew runs in full as "May their camp be a desolation, let no one dwell in their tents." The verb *shamam* sums it up well, to be wasted and resulting in being solitary. The second quote is from Ps 109.8 according to the

Hebrew: “May his days be few; may another seize his goods!” The Septuagint version says “His office let another take.” This has a more direct bearing upon the current situation or office of apostle which will take on a more distinct form as time goes on, *episkope* literally as the act of watching upon. The sentiment of this curse continues pretty much for the rest of the psalm and echos what Peter and his fellows must have felt. Again in light of their ignorance of Judas’ treachery while among them, they must have felt double the anger for having been duped. Not only that, what about Jesus? He is the one who had chosen Judas. Peter prefers to leave that awkward question alone, allowing future generations to theologize about it. In general consensus is that Jesus deliberately chose Judas as an instrument to bring about his death.

Those present were glad to hear Peter speak these words about Judas because they were ill-informed as to what exactly happened. Rumors abounded with regard to the betrayal of Jesus, so now everything was out in the open. Furthermore, most people had an inkling that something much larger was at work and in time would be fleshed out. With regard to this sensitive topic, Peter was citing the best source possible, one which was universally accepted. That, of course, was King David familiar to all observant Jews whom scripture constantly refers to as the archetype on which all subsequent rulers are to be measured, perhaps somewhat unfairly. Thus when Peter equates King David with *pleroo* or to fulfill and the Holy Spirit (more specifically, David’s mouth), everyone understood and were ready to concur. However, it may have come as a surprise to more than a few that David’s words in the two Psalm verses foretold Judas’ betrayal. Also Peter was in a way associating himself with King David which has some validity insofar as he will emerge more clearly as leader of the new *ekklesia*.

Vs. 21 begins with *oun* which the **RSV** translates as “so” in order to make the shift from a somewhat depressing, tense but necessary digression on Judas to a more positive note. Peter now turns to a matter that needs immediate attention, choosing someone to succeed Judas. It’s a top priority because the apostles must number twelve to correspond with the twelve tribes of Israel. This is more than symbolic; it’s a physical foundation on which the *ekklesia* will be built. As for the chief requirement, it’s pretty narrow. The candidates must have accompanied the apostles or more accurately, to have come with them, the verb being *sunerchomai*. Actually this verb is the first of three with the root *erchomai*, to come.

The qualifications gets even narrower. The *sunerchomai* is literally “in all time” or in all *chronos* with regard to two more verbs with the root *erchomai*. One is prefaced with the preposition *eis* or into and the other prefaced with the preposition *ex* or from; i.e., Jesus coming into and coming from. Obviously his ministry is implied but more than that, his relationship with his apostles which had extended over a three year period. The intimacy of this relationship is intensified by the fact that the two verbs with the root *erchomai* are literally “upon us.” It should be noted that despite the close, intimate words being used, each and every one of the apostles remained remarkably impervious with regard to understanding Jesus and his mission. That includes, of course, the present situation.

Vs. 22 is an extended sentence from the verse before it where Peter narrows down more precisely what he means by going in and going out. He begins (*archo* also as the first principle of something) with the baptism of John and is silent with regard to the vast bulk of years before that. This isn’t a matter of neglect but of focus with regard to the task at hand. In this light the details of Jesus’ earlier years are the same as any other human being and don’t fit in here with Peter’s intent. Note that while mentioning John’s baptism or his activity at the Jordan, nothing is said (though implied) with regard to the baptism Jesus had received at his cousin’s hands. Peter jumps all the way through Jesus’ three years of ministry followed by his death and resurrection to the most recent event, one still resonating among the eleven apostles present with him. That, of course, is the ascension. This is expressed through the verb *analambano*, to be taken up with the addition “from us,” first person plural to show that what happened didn’t take place in isolation.

As for the qualifications needed to fill the place of Judas, Peter insists on yet another one, that the candidates must be a witness or *martus* to Jesus’ resurrection. He adds that this witness must “be with us,” his way of verifying the process as much as possible with regard to the most central tenet of faith in Jesus Christ. All this narrowing down didn’t stop the eleven apostles from putting forth two men who fit the bill, Joseph and Matthias. As expected, the next step involves prayer or *proseukomai* or making intercession which is said aloud for all to hear. It assumes the form of speaking directly to the Lord who for them is very close due to his recent ascension.

The apostles speak from direct experience when in their prayer they tell the Lord that he knows the hearts of all, *kardiognostes* comprised of *kardia* and *ginosko*. They ask him to show which of the two men he had chosen, *deiknumi*

prefaced with the preposition *ana* or up to making it more poignant. One is to take the place of Judas' former ministry or *diakonia* which may have made the two feel a bit uncomfortable. Naturally they feared being stigmatized substituting for the man who had betrayed Jesus. The apostles engaged in prayer with this in mind by saying that Judas had turned aside and went to his own place, *parabaino* not unlike what he is noted for, *paradidomai* or his betrayal. Also use of *topos* or place is a clear indication that Judas had definitively and irrevocably separated himself.

And so Chapter One concludes with the election of Matthias, enrolling him among the eleven apostles, *sugkatapsephizomai*. The root *psephizo*, literally to give a vote using a pebble, is prefaced with two prepositions, *sug* and *kata*, with and in according to. This sets the stage for the next step, the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. One can't but wonder how Joseph, the other candidate, felt. It must have been bittersweet. Bitter in that he wasn't chosen and sweet in that he won't have to be associated with taking the place of the man who had betrayed Jesus. Chances are that he remained associated with the now twelve apostles and remained ready should a back-up ever be required.

Chapter Two

This, to be sure, is the most important chapter in Acts because it deals with the day of Pentecost. The first chapter concerns the ascension of Jesus Christ and is a kind of lead into this divine intervention. Without it the descent of the Holy Spirit would never have come about. Thus everything flows from both events right to the last verse of Acts. As for that last verse, it reads "(Paul) preaching the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ quite openly and unhindered." The last two words (a noun and adverb) are significant, *parresia* and *akolutos* and in essence are bestowed upon the apostles at Pentecost. The former means frankness or the ability to speak without fear of recrimination, this originally being part and parcel of belonging to a city state or *polis*. The text reads literally as "with all openness." The latter consists of the verbal root *koluo* or to prevent with the alpha privative, that is to say, with no hindrance. These two gifts are bestowed upon Paul when he arrived in Rome. They are presented at the end of Acts in order to show the continued growth of the church in the heart of the capital or at the very center of Western civilization as it was at the time. Both, of course, have their roots in the Holy Spirit bestowed upon the apostles at Pentecost.

As for the literal translation of the opening words, they run as “And in the being together filled the day of Pentecost.” Here the conjunctive *kai* or “and” both connects the ascension of Jesus and the gathering of the newly constituted number of twelve apostles. Actually *kai* begins the first four verses which deal with the connection between expectation and fulfillment of it. The text doesn’t say if they were alone or accompanied by close associates though it seems it was just the apostles because it was such a momentous event. All are now sitting bundled together, waiting for something to happen but not exactly sure what it will be. Most likely the apostles kept quiet, too caught up in anticipation to say anything. This quiet-as-a-mouse atmosphere contrasts with the dramatic and noisy descent of the Spirit about to happen. At the same time the apostles knew it was time to set aside any tensions among them and simply wait in great expectation. We can picture them, eyeing each other for mutual support.

The verb *sumpleroo* has the root *pleroo* (to fill or to fulfill) prefaced with the preposition *sum* or *sun* rendering it literally as to fill with. The preposition gives an added sense of accomplishment, of having arrived at an intensely anticipated occasion which certainly holds true in this instance. The way this verse runs in English is that you’d expect a second *sum* or *sun* (‘all together’) but instead we have *homou*, at the same place or together along with *epi*, literally as “upon the same.” In other words, *homou* and *epi* are more or less similar and act like *sum* prefaced to *pleroo* to show unity which is very important at this stage of the game. As for *pleroo*, it’s a verb to be aware of as associated with the Holy Spirit and occurs in vss. one, two and four.

How did the disciples know to assemble on Pentecost? They were able to associate it with the Holy Spirit of which Jesus spoke in 1.8. However, from then the amount of days intimated by “in those days” of 1.15 totaled around fifty. It may not seem long, but given the tense situation and uncertainty, time must have dragged on interminably. Fortunately all the comings and goings of trusted friends served to compensate, this with daily prayer noted in 1.14. Nothing explicit is said about family members of the apostles both here as throughout Jesus’ ministry. When he called them, indeed it was true that they left everyone and everything behind. The only exception was when some returned to their old job of fishing after Jesus had been crucified though that seems to have lasted just a short time.

As noted, vs. 2 begins with the conjunctive *kai* followed by *aphno* translated as suddenly and refers to a very brief interval. It seems to refer to just the twelve apostles. It was important for them to be alone in order to have the Holy

Spirit's descent come off just right. If some external interference were present, the Spirit wouldn't fit properly on the head of each apostle, absolutely crucial. Thus *aphno* can represent the assembly of apostles with emphasis again upon the number twelve as symbolic of the twelve tribes of Israel. Though the Spirit's descent lasted a nanosecond or so, in such instances time slows down so that everything occurs in perfect order. Furthermore, the experience has a way of registering in one's memory for life which is precisely what happened to the twelve apostles.

Associated with *aphno* is a sound or *echos* which also means a report which has spread far and wide, that fitting in will the situation at hand. The sound came from heaven or *ouranos*, that is, from above and is described as the rush of a mighty wind. The two words are *pnos* and *biaios*, the former as a blowing in the sense of a blast and the latter describing it as having considerable force. The verb used for this motion is *phero*, to bear or to carry. To those present the rush was more like a mighty swoop where the pressure from above (i.e., *ouranos*) exerted itself forcefully upon those present. However, it neither crushed nor flattened them to the ground. So when this force from above came down, it was only natural to fill the entire house or *oikos*. As for this *oikos*, not only does that include the so-called upper room of 1.13 but all other floors and perhaps neighboring buildings. Note that vs. 2 says this happened when everyone was sitting (*kathemi*), neither standing nor moving about. Actually paralyzed might be more like it but pleasantly so.

Vs. 3 begins with the third *kai*, again to show the quick succession of events. The verb *horao* as aorist passive (to see in the sense of behold) suggests a common perception concerning those involved. That is to say, all present perceived this forceful blowing turn from something heard into something now visible. That consists of tongues resembling fire, an image suggesting a constant, wavy-like motion. It seems that once the tongues of fire have appeared, they distributed on their own. In other words, a whole bunch of these tongues are dancing around and divvy up in accord with each apostle. This, of course, is easy to do, for the essence of fire can undergo constant division without loss. The verb is *diemerizo*, to divide into separate parts in the sense of making distribution, all of which turn out to be equal. The preposition *dia* or through prefaced to the verbal root intimates this. Once this happens, the flames presumably in the same shape as tongues rest on each apostle who is sitting down, that is, *kathizo*. Compare this with *kathemi* of vs. 2, inferring more a seated position. In the situation at hand, the former needs to come first so as to set up a condition for the latter to happen.

Vs. 4 begins with the fourth and final *kai* or “and” which unites all the action into one seamless unity. The same applies to the third instance of *pleroo* or to fill ³. The *pleroo* at hand has to do with the Spirit which is holy, *Pneuma* = *hagios*. Note the difference between *Pneuma* and *pnos* while at the same time the *pn-* is common to both. Not only does vs. 4 begin with the conjunctive *kai*, it has another one showing the result of the *Pneuma*’s resting. That is, they spoke in other tongues, tongues other than their common Aramaic. This in and by itself is noteworthy because those present were essentially peasants. In addition to Hebrew as used in the synagogue’s liturgy, the apostles may have had a smattering of Greek and Latin, but that’s it. Those languages were more common in larger cities. As for such languages, vs. 4 calls them tongues or *glossa*, the same noun as in vs. 5, “tongues of fire.” So now those tongues which were visible are transformed into tongues which utter speech. Note, however, that they are done following a specific pattern. It was in accord with (*kathos* or as) the Spirit’s direction, the verb being *apophtheggomai* where emphasis is upon sound as opposed to meaning. The text continues with regard to this for a good number of verses but says nothing as to the content until vs. 12, the “mighty works of God.”

The **RSV** of vs. 5 begins with “now” or *de* also as “yet” to show continuity with that which was just described and what is about to happen. Attention is directed now to a larger audience or Jews described as devout men. The adjective is *eulabes* which consists of the verbal root *lambano*, to take or to hold prefaced with the adverbial *eu* connoting well-ness. Apparently these people had moved to Jerusalem from other places within the Roman Empire in order to be close to the temple at Jerusalem. “Under heaven” is how vs. 5 presents these people, another way of saying from every known land. Indirectly it shows that Judaism has spread far and wide. Although the Holy Spirit will eventually spread further, at this juncture action is confined to Jews.

Vs. 6 has these people coming together (*sunerchomai*; *sun* as with), attracted to the place where the apostles and their companions had assembled. It was very easy to find, being drawn there by the sound of the wind, the noun *phone* instead of *echos* of vs. 2. These men seem to be the only ones who heard the sound. If the Jewish and Roman authorities heard it, those assembled would have been arrested on the spot. Thus in a way *phone* is selective, deliberately so. Such an event caused them all to be bewildered, *sugcheo* literally to pour out with which suggests total amazement. Simultaneous with this being poured-

³As already noted, the first *pleroo* has the preposition *sum* or with prefaced to it.

out-together (*sug* or *sun*) is that they heard the apostles using their own language. Thus Pentecost is a reversal of the tower of Babel incident. There the Lord came down to examine the situation, obviously in a way different from the Holy Spirit. Those responsible for the tower were scattered whereas those in Acts are gathered together.

Upon having reached the apostles, everyone was astonished to discover that they were Galileans, that is, essentially peasants from the hinterland now in the urbane setting of Jerusalem. They questioned each other as to why all the fuss over the apostles who essentially were of no consequence. In a way, the broad spectrum of people understanding the apostles reflects the Roman Empire's far reach. The two fit together neatly and will provide a pattern of sorts for future evangelization. Among this wide variety of peoples were proselytes or *proselutos*, sojourners in Israel as well as those Gentiles who followed the Jewish religion. Each and everyone one exclaimed that they heard peasants from Galilee not simply speaking in their own language but speaking of God's mighty works, the adjective being *megaleios*.

Vs. 12 elaborates on this some more by using the two verbs *existemi* and *diaporeo*, to be amazed and to be perplexed. The former literally means to stand from (*ex*) and the latter, to be at a loss, the preposition *dia* as through which stresses this. And so there was a lot of back and forth without being able to make sense of this unusual event. Both Jewish and Roman authorities couldn't help but take notice. However, they wrote it off as another blip on the ever changing religious scene. At least these people didn't show signs of causing trouble which was of supreme importance. While those so touched were caught up in the affair, others nearby couldn't resist the urge to mock them, *diachleuzo* being another instance where the preposition *dia* or through amplifies the verb. This consisted in dismissing the apostles as being drunk at such an early hour, that is, filled with new wine, the verb *mestoo* and noun *gleukos* often applied to wine that hasn't been fully fermented.

The **RSV** of vs. 14 begins with "but" translated as *de* to show a transition from this dramatic incident to Peter addressing those who had been drawn to the upper room by the sound (*phone*) of the rushing wind. Obviously there was a need for an interval, a time for everyone to calm down and the apostles to cease speaking as well as those who heard them speaking in their own languages. In other words, things returned to normal. Now the church or *ekklesia* as it is destined to be called may be said to come into a fuller existence. The apostles are in place, Peter is present as the man-in-charge and the audience is ready-

made consisting of Jews and proselytes. The Gentiles, of course, will come later.

Vs. 14 takes pains to say that Peter doesn't speak on his own initiative, rather, he does so while standing (*histemi*) along with the eleven. Once in this position he raises his voice and addresses everyone present, *epairo* or to lift upon (*epi*) and *apophtheggomai* (cf. vs. 4). Although there are three distinct parts (standing->lifting up voice->addressing)...each with an interval...they are as one and function accordingly. The same applies to the eleven with Peter who remained silent but in a real way participated in this threefold action.

Peter's first words are directed to the men of Judea and all dwelling in Jerusalem, that is, the capital and area in which it's located. Note the use of *gnostos* (from *ginosko*) which appears to be impersonal ('let this be known'). It's put as such so that people will realize that Peter isn't speaking on his own nor contriving some story to cover up the apostles speaking as they had just done. Thus *gnostos* differs from the more personal *enotizomai* (*en* + *ous* or *in* + *ear*). And so Peter is careful to use two forms of address in order to balance off his remarks and make them acceptable.

In vs. 15 Peter simply tells those who doubted the apostles speaking in tongues that they are not drunk so early in the morning. Instead, they are fulfilling what Joel had prophesied. His knowledge of the verses that follow show that he, a Galilean and uneducated, was endowed with a knowledge beyond his capacity. If this isn't enough conviction with regard to the Holy Spirit's descent, forget about it. The quote which follows begins in vs. 17 and runs all the way through vs. 21 and comes from 2.28-32.

Before getting into the Joel text itself, first consider the one in Acts (vss. 17-21) followed by the one from the Hebrew:

Acts of the Apostles

Vs. 17. "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;"

Eschatos or last also means what's furthest or final. The plurality of days suggest an indefinite period of time or one which will remain for the divinely appointed purpose at hand. That consists in God saying that he will pour forth his own Spirit or *Pneuma* (also breath) upon all flesh, the verb being *ekcheo* with

emphasis upon the *ek* or from, suggestive of abundance. It will have the following three results:

- Prophecy or *propheteuo*: to proclaim God's message which will be done by the sons and daughters of the people of Israel.

- See visions: the verb *horao* in the sense of behold with regard to *horasis* (from the same verbal root), also as appearance with regard to young men.

- Dream dreams: *enupniazomai* with regard to old men in the sense of those who are elders. Of all three, this possibly is the most respected and venerated.

Vs. 18. "Yes, and on my menservants and my maidservants in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophecy."

This verse is an extended sentence from the previous one. Note that all verses with the exception of vs. 20 begin with the conjunctive *kai* or and which knits them together as one. *Doulos* and *doule* essentially are slaves, the least whom you'd expect the Lord to pour out his Spirit, *ekcheo* and *Pneuma* as in vs. 17 along with days which are last, *eschatos*. Such pouring out will result in these people often considered as not human engaging in prophecy which is super-human. The act of pouring out the Spirit is almost an anomaly, a verb associated with liquid applied to something invisible.

Vs. 19. "And I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth beneath, blood and fire and vapor of smoke;"

Wonders and signs or *teras* and *semeion* or something that astounds and is a distinguishing mark or indication. Both are the object of the Lord giving (*didomi*) which will take place in the future. *Ano* and *kato* are the locations of both, above and below. Apparently the last three are located *kato*.

Vs. 20. "The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the day of the Lord comes, the great and manifest day."

This verse is an extended sentence of the previous one and as noted above, is the only one not beginning with the conjunctive *kai*. The two most dominant celestial bodies (sun and moon) will turn into their opposites. However, both will happen before the day of the Lord which here is not described as last nor is it in the plural. Instead, it's presented as great and manifest, *megalos* and *epiphanos*, the latter as shined upon.

Vs. 21. “And it shall be that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Despite the rather frightening picture Joel has presented, this last verse is encouraging and has direct application to the situation at hand, namely, Pentecost. *Epikaleo* = *sozo* or to call upon = being saved.

Book of Joel

Vs. 28. “And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.”

“And will be after thus” as the text reads literally in reference to all the preparation that had been recounted above concerning what will happen to Israel. That refers to an outpouring of the Lord’s spirit or *ruach* on all flesh. In other words, the Lord is going to *shaphak* his breath which in a sense isn’t an outpouring as with water but the giving forth or breathing of air, if you will. The result of this *shaphak*? It involves three groups, the first singling out two ends of the life spectrum: prophesy (*nava’*, literally, to cause to bubble) done by young people and *chalam* or to dream done by elders. The other two are young men and slaves both male and female: *bachur* (of a marriageable age), *haved* and *shiphchah*. The last two which are at the bottom of society also will receive the *shaphak* of the divine *ruach*.

Vs. 29. “Even upon the menservants and maidservants in those days I will pour out my spirit.”

Heved and *shiphchah*: the former is like *doulos*, a slave; the latter is not so much, implying being a member of a household. Note the plurality of days when the Lord will pour out his Spirit, *shaphak* with regard to *Ruach*.

Vs. 30. “And I will give portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke.”

Mopeth or portents (also miracle, prodigy) is confined to the heavens whereas the earth will have three very visible signs.

Vs. 31. “The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.”

Sun and moon or two principle means by which time is kept, both being unable to do so by reason of darkness and blood. Both will happen before the coming of the day of the Lord described as great and terrible, *gadol* and *yare'* (also to fear).

Vs. 32. "And it shall come to pass that all who call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls."

On such a day every person who calls upon (*qara'* with *b-*, literally in) the Lord's name will be delivered, *malat* also as to escape. St. Paul quotes this verse in Rom 10.13: "For everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved." As for the escape at hand, it's associated with being in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, the *b-* of both affiliated with the *b-* of *qara'*. Apparently there's a smaller group among those who've experienced *malat* and are called survivors, the verbal root *sarad* as to escape (an alternate meaning: to make an incision). It seems this second group is similar to the first with *malat* and *sarad* not being dissimilar. However, for the latter, the Lord will call (*qara'*) them.

After having presented this quote from the prophet of Joel which indeed must astonished many who were present, in vs. 22 Peter addresses the men of Israel compared with the men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem of vs. 14. He bids them to hear the following words (*logos*) where he relates Joel's prophecy to Jesus Christ whom he calls by the more familial name Jesus of Nazareth. Peter appeals to personal experience in this regard, that is, Jesus as someone attested by God himself, *apodeiknumi* fundamentally as to show for public recognition. This is done by the following three which God had effected through him: mighty works, wonders and signs or *dunamis*, *teras* and *semeion*. The first has to do with strength as well as force and noted in 1.8 whereas the other two are found in the Joel quote of vs. 19. Peter brings all three home in a very direct way as having been done "into (*eis*) you." After saying this he adds almost casually that the men of Israel know all this, *oida* in the sense of having information about a given matter.

Vs. 23 continues seamlessly as part of the previous verse where Peter speaks of "this Jesus," the proper name found in the **RSV** but not in the Greek text; it's simply rendered as "this" or *touton*. Now he unabashedly links what God had in store for Jesus, a plan described as definite and with foreknowledge, that is to say, *boule* also means a decision or resolution which has been defined or bounded, *horizo* and *prognosis*, a knowing before. All well and fine. Then Peter

hits his listeners with an unexpected whammy. He says that you...you men of Israel...are the ones responsible for having crucified Jesus of Nazareth. More precisely, they did this through the medium of lawless men, *anomos* implying without a moral code. It's as though such men were hired to carry out the deed. The two verbs are *anaireo* and *prospegnumi*, to lift up and to fasten to, *ana* and *pros* being the two prepositions as prefixes, upon and towards. Although Peter continues speaking through vs. 36, we have no response in the form of an interjection though that will come with vs. 37. So in a way Peter is taking a chance that he won't be assailed either physically or verbally or both.

Vs. 24 begins with "but" in the **RSV** but isn't in the Greek text which instead has a relative pronoun, "whom." Although this verse is independent of the previous one, *hon* (the accusative) or "whom" makes it as one. Also it's comforting for those whom Peter is addressing after he basically had pinned Jesus' death on them or perhaps better, through their association with lawless men. However, Peter is more concerned with saying that God himself raised Jesus and loosed him from death's pangs, *luo* with regard to *odin*, this noun associated with the sufferings a mother experience while giving birth. In other words, God acted according as a midwife which should nullify any remorse his listeners may have. Peter then adds almost casually that it was impossible for Jesus to be held by these pangs or kept in the womb, *krateo* meaning to be strong, powerful.

In vs. 25 Peter quotes at some length from King David, that is, Psalm Sixteen which is attributed to him. Two variations are given here, the first being from the Hebrew text followed by the one from Acts.

Hebrew text

Vs. 8. "I keep the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved."

The keeping of the Lord or *shawah* is a making equal or similar; it also means to set, to place more or less permanently. Note that such *shawah* is constant or *tameyd* but not in the sense of an ontological identification of the psalmist with God. Nevertheless, the distinction between the two realities is maintained: before me, *lenegdy* signifying place-in-front-of, not necessarily identical with. This word is prefixed by the letter *l-* or to; the translation would be literally "to before me."

As for the right hand, in many cultures it's symbolic of the good as opposed to the left hand. The word for right hand is *yamyn*; note that God is at the psalmist's *yamyn*, not the other way around. It's also used for south, for when one's right hand is towards this direction, you're facing the east or sunrise. This position signifies constancy, in not being moved, *mut*. Use of the future tense suggests continuance of that keeping or *shawah* already discussed.

Vs. 9. "Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also dwells secure."

Two aspects of the psalmist's condition which rejoice, heart and soul or *lev* and *kavod*. The latter more accurately means liver which was considered the heaviest of the internal organs, *kavod* being the verbal root with this meaning. The rejoicing or *gyl* comes from the verbal root suggestive of a round dance.

As for the safety of the entire body, it rests upon the *lev* and *kavod* finding joy in God. *Basar* is the verbal root for body. The words "dwells secure" literally read "dwells to trust" or the constant abiding or *shakan* in the direction towards (*l-*) this trust, *labetach*.

Vs. 10. "For you did not give me up to Sheol or let your godly one see the Pit."

Give up or *hazav* connotes finality of abandonment, an apt verb with regards to Sheol, the abode of the dead which the psalmist's soul or *naphash* escapes. He identifies himself with being godly or *chasyd*, from the root *chasad* or one who is the object of God's tender love. As for pit or *shachat*, it clearly implies corruption. "Godly one," *chasyd* is derived from the well-known *chesed* or mercy which is difficult to translate. Being as such doesn't mean one had *hesed* but is the object of it by the Lord.

Vs. 11. "You show me the path of life; in your presence there is fulness of joy, in your right hand are pleasures for evermore."

Because Sheol as mentioned in the last verse infers a location beneath the surface of the earth, the path or '*orach* at hand leads in the opposite direction, that is, upward. Consider this verse in light of two ascensions, that of Enoch and Elijah: "Enoch walked with God and he was not, for God took him" [Gen 5.24]. The second ascension reads, "And as they (Elijah and Elisha) still went on and talked, behold, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of

them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven” [2 Kg 2.11]. This latter example is an upward movement effected indirectly by God through the medium of a chariot of horses; the former is by God himself.

The ‘*orach* or path is a more poetic word and is associated with life, *chayeym*. God is the one who shows this ‘*orach* to the psalmist, more accurately, causes to make it known, the verbal root being *yadah*. In other words, we have here an indirect discovery on part of the psalmist of the path, not a clear manifestation.

As for fullness, it’s the verb *savah* which bears resemblance to another verb, *shavah*, to swear an oath and from which is derived the number seven. Note that joy (*samach*) is in the plural, implying an indeterminate number ‘*eth-panyka*, “before you” or “in your presence”...face...the source of joys. As for pleasure (*nehimoth*), the verbal root is *naham* which is derived from the right hand as in vs. 8, “because he is at my right hand.” The word forever (*netsach*) derives from *natsach*, splendor, glory.

Acts of the Apostles

Vs. 25. “For David says concerning him, “I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken.”

Eis auton or literally “into him” or Jesus Christ. Without hesitation on Peter’s part he accepts King David as having spoken of Jesus. The same seems to be true with those listening to him. This is the first association between the two, bridging the Hebrew Testament and the new one coming to birth.

Proorao or to see before as well as in advance, the preposition *pro* prefaced to the verbal root having both meanings though the former is suggested here. As for the Lord or *Kurios*, it is Jesus himself who is before him always, *dia pantos* literally as “through all” (things). While before or *enopion* (*en* + *ops* or in + face) David, the Lord/Jesus Christ also is at David’s right hand. Both presences will keep David steady, that is, not allowing him to be shaken or *saleuo* also as to rock, to oscillate.

Vs. 26. “therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh will dwell in hope.”

This is an extended verse from the previous one where King David speaks of his heart or *kardia* and tongue. To the first belongs *euphraino* or to be glad, to rejoice and to the second belongs *agalliao* or to be exceedingly joyful. In

addition, David's flesh or whole body will dwell in hope, *kataskenoo* with *eis*, literally "into hope (*elpis*).\" The verbal root *skenoo* means to dwell in a tent and the preposition *kata* (in accord with) suggests making it a permanent dwelling.

Vs. 27. \"For you will not abandon my soul to Hades nor let your Holy One see corruption.\"

Here Hades as the underworld is pretty much equivalent to corruption or *diaphthora* which has the preposition *dia* or through prefaced to the root *phthora* or destruction. King David trusts in the Lord not to allow his soul (*psuche*) to be abandoned in that underworld. The verb *egkataleipo* connotes the separation of a connection, the verbal root *leipo* or to leave behind *eg* = *ek* or from with *kata* or according to as both prefixes.

Vs. 28. \"You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.\"

Gnorizo means to have information which is to be made known or shared and has a kind of indirect air about it. What's involved are the ways of life, *hodos* being plural and suggestive of *Torah* as well as other religious observances. Bound up with these ways is the Lord not just filling David with his gladness but his countenance, *prosopon* also as presence. The verb is *pleroo* which connotes completeness and *euphrosune* or gladness, the root of which (*euphraino*) is found in vs. 26.

On the surface Peter is quoting King David but in a real way he's making him present in the role of a patriarch. This, of course, is more intimate than being a king, for in a way David is not unlike Abraham or father of the nation of Israel. Peter not only speaks of David as such but does so with confidence or *parresia*, that capacity to speak without fear of recrimination. Since it's connected with David, those whom Peter is addressing can't help but concur with him. On the other hand, he's careful so as not to elevate David to a semi-divine status nor confuse him with Jesus Christ. For this reason he mentions that his tomb is with us right now or literally \"in (*en*) us.\"

In vs. 30 Peter calls King David a prophet based upon the extended quote from Psalm Sixteen cited above, the verb *huparcho* literally as to begin under and suggests coming into being. David's origins were humble, he being a shepherd. Nevertheless, his prophetic gift enabled him to know that God had sworn an oath to establish (*kathistemi*: also to set in order or according to, *kata*) one of his

descendants as king. It seems here that God is more interested in David's immediate successor and son who turns out to be King Solomon. Despite his serious faults, Solomon is known for his wisdom, and that precisely is what God is after, not so much for his benefit but for the nation of Israel.

Actually vs. 30 consists in part of a quote from Ps 132.11 which runs here in full as "The Lord swore to David a sure oath from which he will not turn back: 'One of the sons of your body I will set on your throne.'" The verse that follows is telling. David's sons must keep the divine covenant else they will not sit upon his throne. Peter couldn't help but be fully aware of this fact, the successors easily applicable to subsequent leaders of the church which was just getting under way.

Similarly in vs. 31 David both foresaw and spoke of Christ's resurrection, the root *horao* prefaced with *pro*, that is, he foresaw that he will not be abandoned in Hades nor see corruption. The verb *egkataleipo* is found in vs. 27 in conjunction with Psalm Sixteen as well, both instances with the preposition *eis*, "into Hades." The same applies with *diaphthora* or corruption.

In vs. 32 Peter uses the phrase "this Jesus" as if to single him out for further consideration which he proceeds to do adding that "we" are witnesses or *martus*. The first person plural obviously in reference to the apostles with regard to the resurrection. Vs. 33 continues with *oun* or therefore to show the position proper to Jesus. That consists of him being exalted at God's right hand, *hupsoo* not unlike *anistemi* which refers to the resurrection. In that position Jesus has received from the Father the promise or *epaggelia* of the Spirit (*Pneuma*) which is holy. Note the preposition *para* or beside with regard to the Father, this being synonymous with his right hand. Thus from this position Jesus pours out what those present see and hear, *ekcheo* in reference, of course, to Pentecost. As for seeing and hearing, it pertains to tongues of fire and the rush of wind. And so Peter ties in the relationship with Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Peter continues with King David in vs. 34, making clear yet again that he is not to be equated as Jesus Christ by reason of not having ascended into heaven. Such precautions are necessary because of the high esteem David had enjoyed among the people well after his death and continues to do so. He has to avoid all semblances of deification, a common practice at the time. To the people David represents restoration of the kingdom of Israel, something that many were quick to attribute to Jesus. To show that King David indeed is a prophet with a special role, he quotes Ps 110.1 which runs in full as "The Lord says to my

lord: ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.’” Note the presence of two Lords, YHWH and the psalmist’s, ‘Adony, or the king of Israel. As well as the current insertion, this verse is frequently quoted in the New Testament, for example, Mt 22.44, 1 Cor 15.25, Eph 1.20 and Heb 1.3, 13 as referring to Jesus Christ as the Messiah. Implied in the psalm is that the king is newly established and will take his place at God’s right hand. This sitting extends for a certain period of time or until (God is speaking now) he subdues the king’s enemies and makes them a footstool, *hadom*.

Peter concludes his lengthy Pentecost address in vs. 36 with an exclamation which is part command and directed to the men of Israel in vs. 22. Although it’s one sentence, the **RSV** has it as a single paragraph to show despite it’s shortness, how important it is. Those belonging to the nation of Israel are to know for sure—*ginosko* with the adverb *asphalos* or literally safe from falling—that God has made (*poieo*) Jesus both Lord and Christ. He is the very one whom Peter says those he’s addressing right now had him crucified, he having begun his address in vs. 22. It’s a gamble to speak this way, Peter risking the possibility of not just being denounced but stoned on the spot.

Nevertheless, Peter’s gamble paid off. Those whom he had accused...semi-accused might be more like it...were stunned, *katanussomai* in the very heart or *kardia*, the verbal root being *nusso* or to prick or to spur prefaced with *kata* which signifies motion down from above. To their credit and perhaps surprise to Peter, these men didn’t hesitate to ask what they were supposed to do. Apparently there was some basis to his claim as having crucified Jesus or perhaps better, that they had consented by their silence. After all, that event was very recent and memories of it were still fresh. Judging by their sincerity these men were not directly responsible but simply were ignorant of the event. After all, Jesus’ crucifixion wasn’t unusual. They were a dime a dozen. Still, they were concerned enough to have been moved by the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost and asked what they should do.

Peter responded though the text doesn’t say anything as to his astonishment or relief which certainly must have come upon him. Repent and be baptized is what these men are to do, the same message with which both John the Baptist and Jesus himself had begun their respective ministries (cf. Mt 3.2 and 4.17). In all three instances the verb is *metanoeo*, literally to think-after in the sense of leaving one’s former way of thinking behind, *meta*. Despite our familiarity with this verb and noun derived from it (*metanoia*), putting one’s faculty of *noeo* after (*meta*) or behind or in the past is not a once-done deal but is ongoing. Being

baptized is an external practice which ratifies an internal action. The two are to work hand-in-hand for forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit here presented as a gift, *aphesis* and *dorea*, the former implying freedom from an obligation. Actually the text from vs. 1 through vs. 4 seems to suggest that the apostles only were present and that others were drawn to them by the commotion produced by the Spirit they had heard. So while Pentecost was essentially for the apostles, others are destined to share it, *lambano* being the verb which means to receive.

In vs. 39 Peter concedes, if you will, or backs off from words which indeed come across as harsh as when he's holding his listeners responsible for Jesus' death. The promise or *epaggelia*...gift (*dorea*) of the Holy Spirit... is for them as well as to their children. Also included are those described as being far off or literally "into far" (*eis* + *makros*), perhaps intimating the Gentiles. Regardless, it's up to the Lord to call each person, *proskaleo*, *pros* indicative of direction towards-which.

In vs. 40 Peter continues by testifying and exhorting the same people, *diamartureo* and *parakaleo*. Again, note the way prepositions govern each verb. The former with *dia* as a thorough, pointed witness and the latter with *para* or a summoning to be beside which is more along the lines of an accompaniment. Both are directed to those he's addressing that they may save themselves from the present crooked generation. The verb is *sozo* here as separating from the perversion of the current society while the adjective *skolios* fundamentally means to be curved or twisted. Peter ends up by having won over these people who then were baptized, the connection with repentance of vs. 38 being presumed. Finally we have the number of people influenced by Peter's exhortation, some three thousand rendered as souls or *psuche*. *Psuche* can be a kind of term of endearment as well as signifying their special place in society. Obviously Peter didn't start off with such a large number, but new members were added over a relatively short period of time as word got out.

All these people needed to be accommodated for and done so quickly, else they were in danger of drifting away. Though the apostles aren't mentioned as directly involved, we can assume they stepped in and organized the three thousand plus people whom today we'd call converts or the like. Quickly they took on the following three practices which would become standardized for future generations. The verb at hand is *proskartereo* which means to attach oneself, *pros* indicative of this:

-Teaching and fellowship of the apostles, *didache* and *koinonia*, the latter as that which is in common.

-Breaking (*klasis*) of bread or what's known now as the Eucharist. The act of breaking suggests a snapping with emphasis on the sound with regard to the bread at hand.

-Prayers or *proseuche* which more properly means making intercession.

One source of unity for the sudden emergence of this *ekklesia* as it will be called in the near future is fear or *phobos* in the sense of the Hebrew *yare'* or having respect and reverence for the Lord. Vs. 44 to the end of this chapter describes in a nutshell the new way of life that had come to birth. It's presented as having arisen spontaneously and directly from the Holy Spirit. All who belong have the same set of beliefs presented not only by Peter but by the apostles as noted above with regard to their teaching. The phrase literally put as "upon the same" for "were together" is similar to the adjective *koinos* or common though more direct or immediate. And so those who are described as such sold their personal possessions and shared them with each other. This seems to have been done more or less spontaneously, not at the command of someone like Peter who nevertheless must have been overseeing this along with the eleven apostles.

The verb *proskartereo* as in vs. 42 is found again in vs. 46 as attending along with *homothumodon* or having the same or similar impulse, the adjective *homos* with *thumos* which includes the heart and mind working as one. Here it's with respect to temple worship which implies the offering of sacrifices. By this they minimized the possibility of suspicion by the religious authorities who would be quick to connect them with the arrest and execution of Jesus.

Joined with this practice in a seamless fashion is the breaking of bread. It was done in private homes and implies moving from one place to another in smaller, more manageable groups. Following it was a common meal which seems to have been a custom that arose spontaneously. It was done with hearts described as generous, the nouns *aphelotes* and *kardia*. The former is derived from *apheles*, literally as smooth or without a stone and therefore simple or plain. Their praise of God couldn't help but find favor among everyone, *charis* or grace with *pros*, that is, a direct positive influence upon them. Again, the religious authorities couldn't help but be aware of all this but kept quiet, at least for now.

And so Chapter Two concludes on an upbeat note as it should after having described the most momentous occasion of Acts, Pentecost. The fact that the Lord is adding more people on a daily basis intimates the beginning of a new

religious organization that quickly would become distinct from Judaism in which it was still embedded. The verb *prostithemi* or to increase or to set before something that already exists suggests this as well. Such persons are described as being saved or *sozo*, a present participle which intimates something that is ongoing.

The last phrase of this chapter is *epi to auto* or “upon the same” as in vs. 44 where it’s translated as “were together.” The whole intent is not to present an ideal picture but to show the unity between Jesus Christ to Pentecost to the apostles to believers.

Chapter Three

The small, almost invisible *de* translated as “now” is important insofar as it signals the actual beginning of the apostles’ missionary work. At this stage of the game that’s a kind of a misnomer, for Peter and John didn’t set out with the intent of preaching but of doing what all devout Jews do, go to the temple. And so we have here two chief representatives of the twelve apostles actually stepping outside the place where they had been holed up but still within the confines of Jerusalem. Even Peter’s address to those drawn to the apostles on Pentecost take place the same location which even at this early stage was becoming a kind of shrine or holy place. This, of course, is a conjecture because the text has nothing explicit about the situation. One thing is certain, however. Peter remains faithful to Jesus’ command not to leave Jerusalem until the Father’s promise had been imparted to them (cf. 1.4).

As for Peter and John going to the temple at the ninth hour, it could have been the same day as Pentecost though the text isn’t explicit about the matter. The ninth hour is the time when the daily sacrifice is about to take place, so they are doing what their religious beliefs demand of them. Actually it’s described as the hour of prayer, *proseuche* as intercession and petition which fits in nicely with the significance of sacrifice. Keep in mind, however, that Peter and John weren’t accustomed to attending such ceremonies except on special occasions, having come from the Sea of Galilee region. Thus it was something new for them. Also when they stepped outside the place in which they were, they knew something brand new was being initiated even though they were still within the confines of Jerusalem.

En route to the temple Peter and John came across a common sight, a man lame from birth being carried to the Beautiful Gate of the temple in order to beg for alms, the adjective *horaíos* also as pleasant or attractive. These were either relatives or friends figuring he'd have a better chance there when the crowds were greater. Most likely this man wasn't alone but part of a whole cadre of unfortunates. Use of the word "daily" or *kath' hemeran* suggest that this was a common experience reminiscent of the man who hadn't been able to walk for the incredible length of thirty-eight years (cf. Jn 5.2-5). He was accustomed to be at the Sheep Gate meaning that such persons took up their stations literally at each gate to the city of Jerusalem as well as entrance to the temple. People coming and going thus came across quite a gauntlet and for the most part ignored them.

While accompanied with John, Peter glanced over at the lame man in his customary perch. Since they were from the countryside and not accustomed to seeing so many people with various afflictions hanging around, this must have unnerved them. The verb at hand to describe Peter's glance is *atenizo*, (cf. 1.10) referring to the lack of extension relative to space and time and applies to Stephen while being stoned as he gazed into heaven (cf. 7.55). Right away he must have nudged John to look as well. For some reason or other there was something about this lame man compared with all the others who filled every nook and cranny of the Beautiful Gate. To make this more dramatic, *atenizo* is with the preposition *eis*, literally "into him." Right after this moment marked by the sudden suspension of both space and time, Peter commanded the man to look at the two of them, *blepo* also with *eis* or literally "into us." And so we have two examples of *eis*: with regard to two types of looking, *atenizo* and *blepo*.

In vs. 5 the lame man responded to the two apostles, that is, he counted their *atenizo* or gaze-without-extension with one of his own or *epecho*, literally to have upon (*echo* + *epi*). Which is more intense? Both, really, for the two verbs reveal that some communication has been established which soon will lead to a positive result, even dramatic. As for the verb *epecho*, essentially it has less to do with sight compared with holding fast, of being more permanent. By reason of being disciples, right away Peter and John must have thought of those times when they were with Jesus who was curing people of various ailments. Now they had the opportunity to do the same and as Jesus had promised. The location was all the more significant because it was at the entrance to the holiest place for the Jewish religion. This man may have recognized them albeit vaguely and thought he could get a sizable donation or alms, *prosdokaos*, the

preposition *pros* indicative of direction towards-which with regard to expectation. Other than that, the two weren't in the least bit special.

Peter and John remain bewildered at all these people, certainly not like anything back in Galilee. Both must have thought of how Jesus would have acted in a similar situation surrounded by so many unfortunates. That prompted Peter to address the man lame from birth in a somewhat majestic fashion imitating, albeit unconsciously, Jesus. He has neither silver nor gold but will give him what's already in his possession. That, of course, is a cure to his lameness. Peter then simply commands him to walk or *peripateo*, more precisely to walk around. What's crucial here, of course, is that it's in the name or *onoma* of Jesus Christ whom Peter specifies as from Nazareth. This gives the cure a certain local character, if you will, compared with later developments in theology which exalted Jesus far above his human origins.

What follows from vs. 7 into the next several verses is a touching account of this cured lame man, the first of the new dispensation, if you will, one that forebodes well. *Piazo* is the verb where Peter not just grabs but clutches him and lifts him up which causes his feet and ankles to become strong, good as new. The adverb *parachrema* as immediately infers that which is subsequent to an action as well as at once. The root *chrema* (a thing that one needs or matter) is prefaced with the preposition *para* or beside, in the company of. As for the verb *stereo*, often it refers to the making firm of bones as is the case at hand. This man not only stood but spontaneously leaped, *exallomai* literally as to leap or skip from (*ex*). He did this constantly while accompanying Peter and John into the temple, causing quite a scene. The two disciples were delighted but at the same time must have felt that all eyes upon them, including the religious authorities and nearby ever vigilant Roman soldiers.

Not only did the cured man leap uncontrollably, he kept on praising God, *aineo*. Everyone recognized him as having been at the Beautiful Gate which filled them with wonder and amazement. The first noun is *thambos*, also as astonishment whereas the second is *ektasis*, literally a standing-from (*ek*). At this point the only thing people knew was that he had been cured but didn't know why. Some may have remembered the instance when Jesus had cured the man at the pool; other than that, there was no other such miracle. As the newly cured man entered the temple, vs. 11 says poignantly that he clung to Peter and John, *krateo* being the verb which means to be or to make strong. He simply wouldn't let go of the two out of gratitude. A quick inventory of cures wrought by Jesus shows that not one became his disciples. Chances are this man might

be the exception, testifying to what the apostles were capable of doing after Pentecost.

Everyone flocked into Solomon's portico of the temple in preparation for the evening sacrifice, a large spacious area. Peter sees this as a golden opportunity to address the people, *apokrinomai* also as to reply or to answer with the preposition *pros*, direction towards-which indicative of direct, pointed words. He couldn't help but recall Jesus having done the same on numerous occasions. Peter uses the phrase "men of Israel" as he had done in vs. 22. John is silent the whole time though dutifully attentive. The two were very different in character, so despite being apostles, this silence infers a natural tension between them. John has the more sophisticated mind as we see in his Gospel and Revelation but deferred out of respect to Peter, most likely tongue-in-cheek. Obviously the cured man was right beside Peter oblivious to this and was told to restrain himself, obviously a very difficult thing to do. Even though people were listening to Peter, their eyes were on that man and to a lesser degree or if at all, John.

Peter's words in vs. 12 are admirable because he puts forth a rhetorical question in a straight-forward manner as to why those present are wondering at the cure. In fact, they couldn't refrain from staring at him, John and the cured man. The two verbs are *thaumazo* and *atenizo*, the latter quite appropriate for the occasion, last noted in vs. 5. They're doing it naturally, all the while thinking the cure came about by human power coupled with piety, *dunamis* and *eusebeia*, the latter often rendered as reverence. Even though those in the temple area were pious Jews, still the temptation existed for them to elevate Peter and John to a kind of semi-divine status, something both men reject outrightly. That will be a problem later when they and other disciples including Paul expand their missionary endeavors. Most likely when Jesus had sent them out on their first missionary endeavors he had warned them of this.

Vs. 13 is revealing because it shows the mentality of the apostles shortly after Jesus had ascended into heaven and the descent of the Holy Spirit. By associating God with Israel's patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob or as he puts it, the God of our fathers, Peter shows himself firmly grounded in the Jewish religion. The critical Greek text refers these three to Ex 3.6 and 15, important citations mentioned often later in the Bible. The context of both is the Lord's revelation to Moses for the very first time which has its current parallel in the situation at hand. Some of those listening to Peter at the very center of Jewish religious observance...the temple...possibly thought he was not just exaggerating

but going way over the top. Fine to praise Jesus Christ for what he had done as long as it was kept in a posthumous fashion but another thing to elevate him to divine status.

If that wasn't bad enough, Peter unabashedly associates this fully transcendent God in whose sanctuary they are present with Jesus Christ. Again, Peter attributes Jesus' death directly to those persons right in front of him, "whom you delivered up and denied," *paradidomai* and *arneomai* over to Pilate who symbolizes Roman rule and who presumably is still governor. Peter doesn't stop there but continues, John listening in of course but remaining silent out of deference. Peter calls Jesus by a title suggestive of full divinity, the Holy and Righteous One, *Hagios* and *Dikaios* who was rejected in favor of a murderer. Peter adds yet another title to Jesus Christ, one even more divine, if you will, the Author of life, *Archegos* which implies a person responsible for bringing something into existence. Despite this, God raised him from the dead while Peter uses the first person plural to describe him and presumably his fellow apostles as witnesses, *martus*.

After such bold words which have a definite incendiary tone, Peter doesn't speak of Jesus directly but in terms of a name or *onoma* which has brought about the cure of the lame man whom everyone had seen at the entrance to the temple's Beautiful Gate. He attributes to this man faith in Jesus, he being the agent responsible using the name of Jesus of Nazareth to restore the man's limbs. While this was going on, the cured man was simply taking it all in. He turned into quite a celebrity though we lose track of him after this point. Chances are Peter and John encouraged him to go home or to those responsible for having brought him to his customary place of begging. Hopefully he will become a member of the local *ekkesia* if and when it comes into existence, will spread word about having been cured by Jesus through his two apostles. From there it's all guess work as it is with those whom Jesus had cured. Indeed, what happened to them is in essence an open question.

The conjunctive *kai* or and which begins vs. 17 is significant insofar as it signals a shift in Peter's tone. He started off (for the second time) railing against the "men of Israel" as being responsible for Christ's death. It's something he just can't get out of his system due in part to painful recollection of his own role in the matter. That, of course, means his betrayal, something he'll find impossible to shake off for the rest of his life. So in a way this is a personal learning experience. In addition, he had the very real fear of long term damage. Peter realized that once word about Jesus got out to the Gentiles, they might attribute

the death of Jesus to all Israelites. Now Peter admits that the “men of Israel” had acted in ignorance, the verb *prasso* (also to bring about something) with the noun *agnoia* which connotes reprehensible conduct for not paying attention. It’s with the preposition *kata* making it more intimate, if you will, literally “in accord with ignorance.” This ignorance they shared with their rulers or *archon*, applicable to both Jewish and Roman authorities.

Even though Peter shifts gears, he realizes that the damage had been done. Future generations will attribute these “men of Israel” for having condemned Jesus. Even when realizing it might be too late, in vs. 18 he races to correct this by saying that God himself had foretold Christ’s sufferings not just through the prophets but through all the prophets. The verb is *prokataggello* or to give a full report and to do so beforehand. It’s the root *aggello* prefaced with two prepositions, *pro* and *kata* or before and in accord with. A footnote in the NIV singles out the most well known references as Is 53.7-8, Ps 2.1-2 and Lk 24.26. As for the last, Jesus himself said after his resurrection, “Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” The key word in this verse is *diermeneuo* also to make understandable, also to translate with emphasis on the preposition *dia* or through-ness. A proper understanding of *diermeneuo* makes it possible to see that indeed Peter is correct using the phrase “all the prophets,” not just one here and another there. Such is what he means by Christ fulfilling them which concludes vs. 18, *pleroo*.

Peter exhorts the “men of Israel” to repent and to turn again in vs. 19, *metanoeo* and *epistrepho* which echo the first words of John the Baptist and Jesus when they began their respective ministries. Note the prepositions prefaced to each verbal root (*noeo* and *strepho*), *meta* and *epi*, after and upon: to think-after and to turn-upon. Both are geared with regard to the following three:

- Blotting out sin, *exaleipho*, literally to cause to disappear by wiping away or from (*ex*).

- Times of refreshing may come: *kairos* or opportunity with regard to *anapsuxis*, literally a cooling and relief from trouble or obligation. Such special occasions are to come not just from the Lord but from the face or *prosopon* of the Lord, this noun also as presence. Note the way it’s phrased, “may come” or *erchomai*; i.e., it may not come at all.

-That ⁴ God may send the Christ who is appointed. Here Peter divides the name, if you will: Christ or Anointed One and Jesus as Savior. The two verbs are *apostello* and *procherizo* to dispatch to carry out something, literally to put into the hand (*cheir*) of someone, that being Jesus.

Vs. 21 continues from the previous verse where Peter speaks rather mysteriously of Jesus whom the heavens have to receive (*dechomai*) for a certain time. This is designated as *achri* with *chronos*, that is, until with regard to the plural of this noun. This seems to be a reference to the ascension of Jesus into heaven recounted in Chapter One which isn't quite complete until the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, that is, down here on earth. Jesus remains here through the Spirit which is a very different medium than when he had been physically present, even after his resurrection. Such a presence is to be considered in light of the restoration of all things, *apokatastasis*. This noun consists of the root *histemi* or to stand also in the sense of to constitute or to be present prefaced with two prepositions, *apo* and *kata*, from as well as by means of and in accord with. Both work together, if you will, to describe why we have this twofold presence on earth consisting of Jesus and the Spirit. It isn't permanent but designed to establish...*histemi* also to stand...what's found in the created realm and bring it back so as to be in accord with heavenly reality, hence the two prepositions working together as one. This doesn't take place in isolation. The prophets who are holy spoke of this, *laleo* compared with *prokataggello* as pertaining to "all the prophets" in vs. 18.

Instead of leaving this reference to prophets in a vague sort of way, in vs. 22 Peter refers to Israel's most respected authority, Moses. He quotes him directly according to the following two:

Acts (vss. 22-23)

"The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet from your brethren as he raised me up. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. And it shall be that every soul that does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people."

The verb *anistemi* or to raise up can't help but be associated with the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Reference is to Moses which isn't done in isolation, way off somewhere, but from Israel's own brothers (*adelphos*). Similarly the Lord will do the same in the future, and the people are to pay close attention to him. If not, that soul (*psuche*) will not only be destroyed but destroyed from the

⁴This is vs. 20.

people. The verb here is *exolethreuo* whose root *ollumi* means to do away with prefaced with the preposition *ex* or from along with *ek* also as from. I.e., two “froms” to bring him this utter separation with regard to the people.

Deuteronomy (18.15-16 & 19)

“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brethren—him you shall heed—just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire any more lest I die.’...And whoever will not give heed to my words which he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.”

Moses speaks of the best hope for Israel’s future, that is, he will raise up (*qum*) a prophet or *navy*’ from among the people, *qerev* implying the very center of the nation. Not only will this prophet come from that center but will fulfill his mission there. Compare this with 13.1 where a prophet “arises among you.” Here the preposition *b-* or “in” is used compared with the preposition *m-* or “from,” both with *qerev*. False prophets arise in the people, if you will, whereas a true prophet arises from the people. Those who are true are gifted with the ability to see things in a transcendent fashion, not bound to immediate needs and desires. Added to this prophet arising from the people, he does so not as an outsider. The latter Moses compares to himself, a point of reference with which everyone is familiar. Such a person the people will obey, *shamah* being the verb with the preposition *el-*, literally “to him” they will give this obeisance.

In vs. 16 Moses has the people recall...almost forces them to do so...the incident at Mount Horeb when they desired (*sha’al* also means to ask) neither to hear his voice nor see the fire, so fearful that it would lead to death. The desire not to hear or *shamah* intimates the willful desire not to obey or *shamah* though both then as well as now the Israelites didn’t realize it.

Two things stand out in vs. 16: Israel is presented as a one person, “lest I die.” Also that occasion happened “on the day of the assembly” or *qalah*, a specific time not unlike a *kairos* event when Israel perceived itself as one person as just noted. The Lord concurs automatically, vs. 17 beginning with the conjunctive *v-*, “and” leading to his response. He tells Moses that the people have spoken rightly, *yataw* meaning in essence to do anything good. Then the Lord continues to say in the next verse (vs. 18) that he’ll concur with the content in vs. 15 or will give Israel a prophet, the notion of *qum* or rising up not unlike a plant blossoming from within or *qerev*. What distinguishes this prophet from the

false one in 13.1 is that the Lord will put his *davar* or word in his mouth so he may *davar* or speak to the people. Such an action borders upon the physical and is intended to be taken as such.

The conjunctive beginning vs. 19 shows the close connection between the one beginning vs. 17, that is, the immediacy and importance of what's going on right now. *Shamah* or heed equals what which the prophet is speaking (*davar*), failure of which results in the Lord requiring or *darash* of him. This verb fundamentally means to tread or trample, so with this in mind, the Lord will pounce on whomever does not come through. The preposition *min* is used backing up the action of *darash*, that is, "from you."

After this rather lengthy quote from Deuteronomy in vs. 24 Peter mentions those prophets from Samuel onward, Moses being the only one before him. Samuel is important insofar as he had anointed David King. However, before him Samuel had anointed Saul which was expressly against the Lord's wish because it signifies that the people rejected him as king (cf. 1Sam 8.7). However, it should be kept in mind that Samuel had anointed Saul as first king, he having turned out as a disaster. The same can be said of many of Israel's kings despite the fact that they had proclaimed "these days," the verb being *kataggello* suggestive of making known in a broad manner, the preposition *kata* (according to) indicate of this.

Having spent consider time and effort as well as having put himself on the line, in vs. 25 Peter speaks to the "men of Israel" as direct descendants of the prophets. In other words he means their sons along with the covenant God gave to their fathers. *Diatheke* is the noun for covenant and the verb *diatithemi* as to give, the former derived from the latter literally as to place-through. He then quotes from Gn 22.18:

Acts

"And in your posterity shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Sperma = seed or offspring and *eneulogeo* which has the preposition *en* or "in" and adverbial form *eu* signifying well-ness prefaced to the verbal root for *logos* or word.

Genesis

"And by your descendants shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves because you have obeyed my voice."

Zerah or descendants is the same as *sperma*, seed. Here they will bless themselves, *barak* here presented in a reflexive mood, that is, the nations will be blessing themselves, not God doing it. However, reliance upon God is shown by these nations having listened literally “in my voice.”

In the last verse of this chapter Peter can't help but come off with a dig directed towards those listening to him. As noted earlier, he remains bothered by having betrayed Jesus, and despite having been forgiven by him, has a hard time accepting others who may have had a part in Jesus' death, even if in an indirect way. He says that God himself had raised up his servant, *pais* fundamentally as child. Even better, God sent Jesus-as-risen to you, the “men of Israel” in order to bless them, *eulogeo* which is akin to *eneulogeo* of vs. 25. This has direct application in that it enables them to turn from their wickedness, *apostrepho* and *poneria*, the latter also as evil intent. Thus Peter leaves us held in abeyance not knowing the reaction to his harsh words. He would continue as such but for a limited time. Later on Peter will have a vision on the rooftop of the home of Cornelius the centurion. His response? “But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean” [10.28].

Chapter Four

The first thought that comes to mind when vs. 1 mentions the priests, captain of the temple and Sadducees⁵ is time. Actually this is the first occasion in Acts of the Apostles we hear of these religious authorities whom we've been anticipating to come on the scene right from the start. Their absence to date doesn't mean they weren't paying attention to the apostles and their activity. The same applies to the Romans, every present and discreet. As long as these people behaved, no problem.

De is translated in the **RSV** as “and as” which begins this chapter to show the close connection between the present situation concerning Peter and John and their activity in the previous chapter. There Peter is recorded as addressing the “men of Israel” [3.12] while John doesn't utter a single word. However, the first verse suggests that both were actively engaged in conversation, the common verb *laleo* with the preposition *pros*, directly towards or speaking with those present. Obviously the authorities mentioned in the first paragraph were drawn

⁵The Pharisees aren't mentioned until 15.5. As for the Romans who are noted, they're even more remote while at the same time ever hovering in the background.

to such a gathering most likely through spies or agents in the field. Given the small compact nature of Jerusalem, it was easy to keep tabs on them. This represents the first time they intervened and swooped down like birds of prey to snatch Peter and John in the very act of speaking. The verb *ephistemi* means to come upon, that is, in the literal sense and implies they were attentive to every word Peter and John were saying.

Vs. 2 continues as an extended sentence with a word we've been expecting from the authorities, *diaponeomai* translated as "annoyed" and also can mean to be indignant. It consists of the verbal root *poneo*, to work hard prefaced (and intensified) by the preposition *dia* or through prefaced to it. The objection is obvious. Note the literal way vs. 2 puts it. They (Peter and John) were teaching (*didasko*) the people along with the very act of proclaiming (*kataggello*) "in Jesus" the resurrection from the dead. I.e., emphasis is upon in Jesus and the resurrection.

The authorities whisked Peter and John away and placed them in custody, *teresis* also as prison, so as to avoid any of their followers coming to their rescue. Easily this could have blown up to a full-scale confrontation but then again, fear of the Romans was behind their every move. Most likely the two were kept separate so as not to offer an opportunity to contrive any defense. Also the authorities didn't want them influencing the other prisoners. We can be certain that those responsible for arresting the two didn't even bother giving an explanation. The less said the better. Hopefully all their followers would dissolve, and things would return to normal. It'd come as no surprise that those who were bolder sought out the other ten apostles and/or their associates. Word had to get out about this incident least it be swept under the rug and forgotten.

Despite this incident which could be described as the first real persecution of yet to be known Christians, vs. 4 offers hope. Many of the "men of Israel" had heard the word...the *logos* from Peter and John...and believed, *pisteuo*. Even though they were momentarily left without guidance, their number increased to some five thousand. That means those present were feverishly engaged under the Holy Spirit's guidance. Even though the two disciples were snatched away to an unknown fate, the five thousand had to get along without them and start organizing themselves. If they didn't do this, they would simple dribble away. Details aren't give, almost deliberately so. It's left to us to intuit how this worked out and in essence, to rely upon the Holy Spirit in the same manner as these people were doing.

Vs. 5 has the rulers, elders and scribes assembled compared with the priests, captain of the temple guard and Sadducees of vs. 1. Luke takes pains to mention that this occurs in Jerusalem, the same place where Acts thus far takes place. Mention of the capital has a way of highlighting the drama playing out in the very heart of Judaism, more specifically the temple, vis-à-vis what's turning out to be a new, threatening movement.

Vs. 6 includes Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander and all belonging to the high-priestly family. What makes this all the more outstanding is mention of the first two individuals who were directly involved with the arrest and death of Jesus. So this assembly of characters, indeed the top brass, shows how much this new movement had gotten under their skin. In essence, Jesus and his message now living through his apostles are a direct challenge to their authority. Something like this never happened before. Never had they a supposed dead man's authority be a direct threat to the establish religion. The increase of five thousand reveals that the more these authorities press down, the more this movement attracts new followers. Again, while all this is going on, Rome is keeping a sharp out.

The drama now gets underway in vs. 7, the previous verses presenting a list of notable participants intended to increase the impending confrontation between the old and the new. Note how all these important people handle the two Galileans. They set them in the midst, *mesos* also as middle which means the questioning or *punthanomai* also as making inquiry has all these eyes from every quarter bearing down upon Peter and John. While under such intense scrutiny, the authorities were keenly aware of the alarming growth of the new movement that has started to take root just outside their sacred precincts. Without a doubt, the five thousand is no small number to reckon with. Thus the authorities were unwittingly squeezed in between the two apostles and the veritable army just outside their doors. Peter and John knew this which was reflected in their very countenances, that alone being enough to unnerve those questioning them.

In the situation at hand we see clear as a bell what was bothering all those assembled. It was a question of power or *dunamis*, that *dunamis* being a direct existential threat to official Judaism whose chief representatives were present. Also they were concerned by what name these so-called rebels had done this, *onoma* being pretty much equivalent to *dunamis*. As for the issue at hand, it was speaking publicly about Jesus whom the authorities thought had been taken care of once and for all. That's what they wanted to squelch above everything else.

In addition to this new movement which to them had political ramifications there's good reason for them to be on edge. Already Rome has a tight grip on Israel. It could get tighter if the situation at hand got out of control. This has been mentioned several times though not found directly in Acts though certainly in the background.

Vs. 8 begins with *tote* or "then" with regard to Peter who again speaks. Even in the short time between the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost clearly he has assumed the role Jesus bestowed upon him as recorded in Mt 16.18. Peter now finds himself transformed and confident even after having betrayed Jesus. Now he's filled (*pleroo*) with the Holy Spirit, *Pneuma* being in the genitive and literally "filled of the Holy Spirit." Actually the *pleroo* at hand is a short time after the one of 2.4. Peter doesn't walk around *pleroo* all the time coming off with magisterial pronouncements. Rather, he delivers them not on his own but when the situation prompts him. In the meanwhile, he and the Spirit are learning to live together as is the case with the other apostles. It's something new for them and takes some getting used to.

In vs. 8 Peter addresses all the notables assembled calling them rulers of the people and elders, generic catch-all titles intended not to present himself as being offensive. He gets right to the matter at hand, namely, cure of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the temple. However, he puts it deliberately as a possibility using the word *ei* or "if." In a way, it's protection against any recrimination from the religious leaders who as on now examining Peter and John the verb *anakrino* or to conduct a judicial hearing. It consists of the root *krino*, to judge or to decide with the preposition *ana* or upon prefaced to it. Peter puts this judging-upon in the context of a good deed or *euergesia* or perhaps better as a deed done well (*eu*). He also anticipates what's on the minds of those who have dragged him and John off the street, namely, how was the cripple healed, *sozo* being the verb which also can be taken as healed in a manner more comprehensive than physically.

Peter continues to speak with a magisterial air in vs. 10 (it continues as an extended sentence from the previous verse) with *gnostos* or known and *esto*, "let it be." He, a fisherman from Galilee, fearlessly spoke before the best and the brightest of Jerusalem if not the entire land, wishing that both they and the nation of Israel know the lame man had been cured by Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Peter had referred to Jesus of Nazareth in 3.6 but here uses the full name associated with humble Nazareth for the first time, possibly for effect. Peter adds that those whom he's currently addressing are directly responsible

for having crucified him. Clearly such words couldn't have been uttered unless influenced by the Holy Spirit. Furthermore and for effect we read here that this lame man is actually present. Both Peter and the authorities wanted it as such but for two very different reason: Peter, for proof positive and the rulers that the man was healed by some kind of magic or even that the whole thing was feigned.

In vs. 11 Peter decides to back up his words with an authority those before him could accept. Having access to scripture was a sure-fire way against which no one could contend. As in other instances, the comparison between the two instances of the same scriptural verse runs as follows:

Acts

“This is the stone which was rejected by you builders which has become the head of the corner.”

The strong verb *exoutheneo* means to have no use for, *oudeis* being the root as no one; also note the preposition *ex* or from. Here it's passive relative to those who are engaged in a building project. Despite this, the stone has become that on which the entire structure hangs, something like a keystone.

Psalm 118.22

“The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner.”

Here the stone is rejected outrightly, *ma'as* connoting to despise. As for the cornerstone, reference as with the Acts citation could refer to building the Jerusalem temple.

Clearly in both examples the builders have made a grave mistake. It would be better not to blame them but more accurately, the architects who were responsible for planning the building. The laborers simply and almost blindly were carrying out orders from above.

Peter concludes his remarkable, coolly delivered defense in vs. 12 by not mentioning Jesus but the word name, a means by which to convey his point and hopefully not to incite those whom he's addressing. He and they never will be reconciled, something each side realized, so don't unnecessarily aggravate the situation. Jesus' name or *onoma* is equivalent with the only valid form of salvation (*soteria*) available. It is given literally “in men” under heaven, the

means to be saved or *sozo* which is the same verb used with respect to the cured lame man. Although *sozo* has been used a number of times thus far in Acts, in a way it remains somewhat unspecified. Implied is something wrong with the human condition which everyone knows but can't quite put their fingers upon. So when it comes to Christ as presented thus far, the answer to this perennial problem has a solution readily available.

Obviously *thaumazo* is the key word in vs. 13 meaning to wonder, to be astonished. It's something those questioning Peter and John—the best and the brightest of the land—were reduced to, the latter again being silent. More specifically, they were struck by their *parresia* or boldness, courage of speech, especially because they were known to be uneducated, common men from Galilee. The two adjectives are *agrammatos* and *idiotes*; the former literally as unable to write and the latter, unskilled or without experience. In addition to this they recognized both men had been associated with Jesus, the verb being *epiginosko*, literally to know upon.

Not only were the authorities perplexed, they couldn't but help see the lame man who had been cured right beside them. They were struck by the radiant joy on his face wondering why these people had a grudge against Peter and John, the very ones responsible for his cure. Confronted with this, all were reduced to silence, *antilego* meaning to speak against. And so they had no choice but to dismiss them while conferring with each other, *sunballo* with *pros*, literally to cast together. It was an interesting group, to be sure. All had different views on what to do, the death of Jesus fresh in their minds as well as rumors that somehow somewhere he had returned to life. In vs. 16 they admitted that without a doubt a sign had been wrought. The noun is *semeion* modified by *gnostos* or a sign which for all practical purposes is self-evident, *phaneros* being open or almost unavoidably evident. More than that, it happened right on the temple's very doorstep with dozens of witnesses, something they could not deny, *arneomai* also as to disclaim. At least they were honest enough to admit this, especially when you take into consideration that Annas and Caiaphas were among their number.

The solution to this conundrum? Give Peter and John a warning, *apeileo* also as to threaten. However, they couldn't come to an agreement as to what this warning involved. Threat of death? Banishment from Israel? Handing them over to the Roman authorities? All these were readily available including violence against the other apostles and those associated with them. Surely such thoughts occupied Peter and John while they were held in custody. The

authorities ended up by deciding on the easiest way out in order to keep the people...and Romans...quiet. The apostles were forbidden to speak not so much about the name but literally “upon (*epi*) this name” or *onoma*. It’s a recognition that Peter and John as well as others with them were imbued with the teachings of Jesus and were literally dependent upon (*epi*) it. Hopefully things could get back to normal. As for speaking about the name of Jesus, the verb is *phtheggomai* or to utter a sound compared with something like *aggello* often associated with the act of proclaiming. That of course, is what the authorities were deathly afraid of.

In vs. 19 Peter and John waste not time responding, speaking with that *parresia* or boldness as in vs. 13. In other words, we have both saying the same thing to the same people, a sign of unity of purpose. As time goes on, *parresia* will be recognized as one of the outstanding marks of those belonging to the budding *ekklesia*. The issue at hand boils down to a simple choice. Either they must listen to God or rest on their own authority as the text has it, “in the face of (*enopion: en + ops*) God” which literally reads “in the face.” The decision now belongs to the authorities to judge, the two men adding in vs. 20 that they’re speaking only of what they have seen and heard. This refers not only to recent events but their time with Jesus while he was going about his ministry.

Vs. 21 is revealing of the assembly comprised of Israel’s most notable people. Despite having been threatened—*prosapeileo* with *pros* or direction towards—which infers direct, future retaliation—to the surprise of Peter and John, they’re set free. There simply was no reason to punish them, *kolazo* also as to curtail. The reason? All those who had arraigned themselves against the two apostles were fearful of the people. They could feel their presence just outside the door, many having assembled spontaneously awaiting word of what would happen. If Peter and John were imprisoned, a riot would break out. This, of course, suggests the far greater fear of the Romans stepping in. And so this incident comes to a close with mention of the cured lame man’s age, more than forty. That perhaps was added to show that the person laying at the center of this controversy was no child. He, like so many who have been cured by Jesus and now his disciples, simply passes off the scene. However, given his profound gratitude, it’s come as no surprise that he continued to tag along with the apostles and the larger group of associates.

From vs. 23 or when Peter and John had been released to the end of this chapter we have what amounts to a joyous reunion with their friends, literally “in the direction of their own,” *pros* with *idios*, this being significant because it

contrasts with the existing chief priests and elders. After all, they had been and in effect continue to be those responsible for maintaining Israel's religious tradition. No one in his right mind would dare reject them outrightly without incurring their wrath. As for the friends of Peter and John, they were simply thrilled and eager to hear their report, *apaggello* with *pros* also to inform, to give an account. What they would say would contribute much in determining how to move forward if at all. And so a lot hinges on this.

Vs. 24 captures the overall mood perfectly. Everyone spontaneously lifted up their voices in unison, *airo* with the singular *phone* or voice along with the adjective *homothumodon*. This is comprised of *homos* + *thumos*, the latter noted adverb as heart and mind working as one, this amplified by the adjective meaning one and the same, in common. As for the prayer, it continues through vs. 30.

And so in vs. 24 everyone, including Peter, John and presumably the other ten apostles address God, calling him Sovereign Lord or *Despotes* which often applies to someone who's master of a household. If so, it adds a more personal touch to the situation at hand. There's a certain liturgical touch as well, a footnote to the critical text combining Ex 20.11 and Ps 146.6 which run in full as follows:

“For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”

Although the Sabbath isn't mentioned, surely those uttering these words were mindful of it, day seven when the Lord had rested from his works, one that he set aside by blessing it. This verse uses the verb *nuach* which means an extended rest or settling down compared with *shavath* associated with the “original” one of Gn 2.2, to cease, to desist or to be completed.

“Who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever.”

The last words are important with regard to the keeping of faith, emphasis upon the verb *shamar* or to keep as in keeping watch on a city wall. The object here is *'emeth* also as firmness, reliability.

These two verses form a kind of preface to what comes next in reference to King David whom those speaking as faithful Jews acknowledge as “the father of us” and “the child of you (the Lord).” He had uttered the following through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit the following from Ps 2.1-2:

Acts

“Why did the Gentiles rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth set themselves in array, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Anointed (Christ).”

A rhetorical question which has its origins in a real-life situation, Gentiles often being those inimical to Israel and the Israelites themselves. *Phruasso* or to rage implies being arrogant or haughty which is balanced out, if you will, by the Israelites thinking of things which are useless. *Meletao* is the verb at hand also as to study and *kenos* the adjective meaning empty. Note the two which both oppose, the Lord and his Anointed (*Kurios* and *Christos*). The verb *sunago* applies to both, literally to go with.

Psalm Two

“Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and his anointed.”

Such scheming is associated with the kings and rulers of the next verse plotting against the Lord. Note that this is the only occurrence of *ragash* (to conspire) in the Bible with the exception of the Chaldean verb in Dan 6.6(7), 11(12). The vain things or *ryq* on which the nations plot is reminiscent of that vanity described by Ecclesiastes whose first chapter recounts the restlessness and monotony inherent in nature, an image applicable to this verse’s conspiring and plotting. In Ecclesiastes, vanity is *havel*, a verb associated with breathing, whereas the Psalm’s *ryq* means something empty, for example, an empty container. The image conveyed is one of rattling, of clatter.

Vs. 27 continues as an extended sentence, a kind of add-on by the people who welcomed Peter and John in vs. 23. Now they seek to apply the Psalm’s words to the current situation while not afraid to mention Herod and Pontius Pilate. They, along with the Gentiles and Israelites, were gathered against Jesus, the verb *ago* as used in the above quoted Psalm. In other words, what happened then prefigured what has just occurred. Jesus is described here as God’s holy servant or *pais* who had been anointed, this noun also as a child which can be

taken as a term of endearment. As for the verb *chrío* or to anoint (with oil), it's the verbal root for *Christos*.

Vs. 28 continues in uninterrupted fashion, that is, the people shift gears to see recent events as directed by God or more precisely, his hand and plan, *cheir* and *boule* being one and the same. With regard to both the verb is *proorizo* translated as predestined, literally as to set a boundary before. Right after this the friends of Peter and John ask the Lord to consider the threats leveled against them, *ephorao* being the verb which connotes gazing with the noun *apeile*. For now, these threats were of a general nature, but the apostles and their associates were fully aware that at any moment they could turn deadly.

In vs. 29 those assembled bring their prayer to a conclusion with the sincere desire that the Lord bestow upon his servants (*doulos*, also as slave) *parresia* or as already noted, that boldness one of the chief characteristics of the apostles after Pentecost. Here's it's connected naturally enough with being able to speak the divine word or *logos*. This is joined in the next verse which continues seamlessly as acknowledging that the Lord is stretching out his hand to heal. Note the present tense of *ekteino* or to extend-from with regard to *cheir* (hand) as in vs. 28. Furthermore, through Jesus again as holy *pais* (cf. vs. 27) signs and wonders are being done, *semeion* and *teras*.

Vs. 31 is a kind of second Pentecost for those fortunate enough to be associated with the apostles. That is to say, upon completing their prayer (*deomai*, to ask, to request), the place where they had assembled shook or *saleuo*, and all were filled with the Holy Spirit. Like the apostles, they too spoke the *logos* of God with boldness, *parresia*. However, nothing is said if this *logos* diverged into various tongues. Most likely it did not because focus is upon the budding *ekklesia*, not with the intent to manifest the *Pneuma* to a wider audience.

Vs. 32 goes at some pains to describe the unity of the company of believers, *plethos* more as a multitude and suggestive of a growing number. All were of one heart and one soul, *kardia* and *psuche* which is reflected in holding all things in common, the adjective *koinos* opposite to the verb *huparcho* literally as to begin under and referring to what was in the possession of each person. This was something that arose spontaneously from the recent second descent of the Holy Spirit followed in vs. 33 with the apostles giving witness or *marturion* to the resurrection of Jesus with great power, *dunamis*. The verb at hand is *apodidomai* or to give which here has a fuller sense of rendering what is due. The very act of such *apodidomai* effects not just grace or *charis* but one which is great

upon all present. So what is given to the apostles is simultaneously given to their associates.

Vs. 34 again brings up the fact that all contributed to the common good with the result that not a needy person was found among them, *endees* also as deficient. Actually the donation of lands is involved which infers that the apostles had attracted wealthy people. Vs. 35 recounts in an almost liturgical way how this and the donation of other things were given, that is, they laid it at the feet of the apostles after which distribution was made. Perhaps this was associated with the celebration of the Eucharist or on a specific day. Regardless, it demonstrates an increasing sense of organization which soon will evolve into an *ekklesia*. Some interested people perhaps questioned this practice and wondered if they could associate with the apostles while maintaining regular family life.

Chapter Four concludes with special mention of Joseph who was given the surname Barnabas by the apostles, his name singled out as being son of encouragement, *paraklesis* also as exhortation, *para* + *kaleo* or to summon about or nearby. What's significant about him is that he's a Levite, a member of the priestly class. He will play an instrumental role later by introducing Saul to the apostles when everyone else was terrified of him (cf. 9.27).

Chapter Five

The first word opening this chapter in the **RSV** is “but” or *de* which signals a shift in the action at hand but closely related to what now follows. Chapter Four concluded on an upbeat note with new members of the *ekklesia* who freely had made generous donations of their possessions as well as land as in the case Joseph, a.k.a. Barnabas. In a way, such spontaneous manifestations of generosity set the stage for the tragedy to follow. Even if we haven't read the Acts of the Apostles, without knowing why we feel something ominous not unlike during the summer when we feel the approach of a thunderstorm lying just over the horizon. Such is the power of the tiny word *de*.

In this opening verse we have a husband and wife, Ananias and Sapphira, the former being introduced as “a man named.” The way it's presented in itself raises red flags. That phrase, along with the just mentioned *de*, is an intimation that what follows won't turn out to be good. Ananias sold some property or *ktēma* (also as possession) but kept part of the money from the sale, having done

this with his wife's knowledge. The noun for knowledge is *suneidesis*, a fuller term in that it implies awareness and cooperation (*sun* or with) in an endeavor. Connected with it is the verb *nosphizo* or to withhold. Another way of putting this is that husband and wife conspired to keep a nest egg for themselves, *time* being the noun for the sale at hand. That may have been acceptable if they had informed the apostles, however they did not and were about to pay the price.

Easily we can imagine what was going through the mind of Ananias as he was laying this *meros* or part of the sale at the feet of the apostles, the plural suggestive of all twelve assembled. Nothing is said of his wife who presumably was absent (cf. vs. 7). With the exception of Peter the apostles were unaware of this couple's deception but could tell from the expression on their faces that something wasn't quite right. After all, they were expecting a sizable donation from this sale of property which would go a long way to support the newly formed *ekklesia*⁶. Then in vs. 3 which begins with another *de* or "but" Peter speaks directly to Ananias telling him that Satan has filled his heart, *pleroo* and *kardia*. This is the first of only two instances when Satan is mentioned in Acts, the other being 26.18. In other words, there's a direct correlation between *pleroo* and *nosphizo* or to withhold of vs. 2. Both are contrary to the Holy Spirit, the one to whom Ananias (and Sapphira) had lied, *pseudomai*, also to tell a falsehood. In a direct manner typical of him, Peter puts the first of four rhetorical questions to Ananias. He doesn't expect a response because Ananias and Sapphira won't live long enough to answer.

The two were simply shell-shocked and could do nothing except listen to Peter rebuke them four-fold. The other rhetorical questions follow as: the land was their before it was sold, once sold it was at his disposal and finally the punch line. What made Ananias contrive such a deed, the verb *tithemi* or to place? The phrase "in your heart" (*kardia*) is added for emphasis. Peter concludes with the damning words that Ananias had lied to God, not to men, *pseudomai*. This was enough to give Ananias something like a heart attack which made him drop dead on the spot. The verb *ekpsucho* is vivid and fits the situation, literally to make cool from (*ek*) or to breath.

In vs. 5 we have a second sentence beginning with the conjunctive *kai* or "and" to show the close connection between Ananias' sudden death and the response

⁶At this early stage we tend to look for a word to describe the apostles and those associated with them, being tempted to use the word Christian. However, that doesn't appear until 11.26. So in this interim period it can be a bit awkward searching for a word to describe them since we're so accustomed to used "Christian."

by the *ekklesia*. That is to say, great fear (*phobos*) fell upon all who heard this report. Chances are that Ananias was fairly well known and respected. Having withheld money from the apostles sent a shock wave through the local community and to some degree may have backfired concerning the apostles. People may have desired to join them but were terrified that something similar could happen to them even if their intentions were fine. Note that this incident closes in dramatic fashion with young men coming in, wrapping up the body of Ananias, carrying him away and burying him apparently in an unceremonious fashion.

In vs. 7 what happened to Ananias is about to happen to his wife. After some three hours Sapphira returns, looking forward to be welcomed into the new, budding community under the apostles' direction. Surely her husband had managed to pull off a deal that would satisfy them as well as taking care of their personal needs. Even before confronting Peter she knew her gig was up. He asked directly whether she had sold the land and for so much. Actually it was her husband who had done this, but Peter wants to put two and two together so as not to make a fatal mistake. She responded with an honest answer but knew Peter was on to her. Strange to say, her husband was absent which made her feel uncomfortable. Then Peter put to Sapphira a rhetorical question with the same force as he had done with Ananias. That is to say, how did she and her husband agree to tempt the Spirit? The verb *sumphoneo* literally as to speak clearly is with *peirazo* or to tempt. In other words, Peter saw right through Sapphira as having conspired with her husband.

In vs. 9 Peter continues with *idou* which the **RSV** translates a bit poetically as "hark" or perhaps more accurately, "behold." With some dramatic flair he says that the feet of those who had carried out her husband Ananias are right outside the door waiting to do the same with her. Before Sapphira could respond, she drops dead on the spot, the same verb *ekpsucho* as with her husband along with *parachrema*, immediately or at once which literally reads "beside the thing" or the matter. At least Sapphira was buried beside her husband. These two back-to-back incidents naturally struck fear (*phobos*) into the entire church or *ekklesia*, this noun being used here in Acts for the very first time. If there's anything positive to come from this dramatic situation, the apostles and those with them are gradually obtaining a firmer identity. And so Luke uses the example of this couple, essentially well-meaning but wanting to have their own way. It's a cautionary tale for the newly constituted church that in time...most likely a short time...will be modified.

Vs. 12 has another use of *de* which the **RSV** translates as “now.” It’s an important *de* because it signals having come off the harrowing incident with regard to Ananias and Sapphira. To many they seemed to have made a generous offering and were severely punished for a relatively minor offense of withholding some money as a nest egg. With the intent to change the subject and leave this somewhat embarrassing incident behind, Luke takes pains to insert not just signs and wonders (*semeion* and *teras*) wrought by the apostles but as effected literally as done “in the people.” Although they aren’t spelled out we can assume they took the form of healing and perhaps even restoring to life some people from the dead. Vs. 12 concludes with this activity apparently focused within the Portico of Solomon mentioned last in 3.11. Note the adverb *homothumodon* as found last in 4.24, *homos* + *thumos*. The latter is noted earlier as heart and mind working as one, this amplified by the adjective meaning one and the same, in common. Again, all the action thus far has taken place within the small confines of the city of Jerusalem.

Vs. 13 reflects both the fear and reverence with which everyone held the apostles, again some of it traceable to the fate of Ananias and Sapphira, not so much the signs and wonders though they may have had played a role. The verb *megaluno* sums it all up, literally to be or to make large. This attitude which is a mixture of truth, fear and exaggeration continues with multitudes of men and women being added. The verb is *prostithemi* with emphasis upon the dynamic nature of the preposition *pros*, direction towards-which. It contrasts with those who stood apart but remained fascinated, this designated by the verb *kollao*, literally to cling. In other words, they dared not cling to the apostles and those with them. Note that Luke takes pains to include women, not simply men. Use of the present participle *pisteuo* or those believing shows a common growing sense that those so designated have a proper name which as noted above, will come in due time.

One indication of the signs and wonders of vs. 12 is when people carried out onto the streets those who were ill on all types of beds and the like when they got word of Peter passing by. Hopefully his shadow would fall on them and heal them. This wasn’t as straight forward than at first glance. Due to the congested nature of the city...tight alleyways and so forth...the sunlight didn’t penetrate there all the time. If and when the light did, it would be sporadic and filtered. Even open air markets were problematic due to canopies and various devices to provide cover from the sun. That leaves the open spaces of Solomon’s Portico, but that too might have been covered with portable means of providing shade. With this in mind, the people had to resort to ingenious

methods such as tearing down some of these coverings as well as encouraging Peter to come out at high noon into a garden just off the street with the sun momentarily overhead. That, of course, was siesta time but given the desperation of so many people, they came out regardless.

And so this section concludes with vs. 16 where people not only from Jerusalem brought those in need of healing but from nearby towns. This indeed is significant because it's the first reach to contact a broader audience by the apostles even though they still remained inside the city. As for remaining within Jerusalem, that meant being in close vicinity to the temple, the holiest place for Jews. Surely some if not all would miss this contact when they made their move to spread the Gospel.

Another instance of *de* translated as "but" by the **RSV** is found in vs. 17. Here it serves to introduce what happens for the rest of Chapter Five, namely, all the apostles being taken into custody for the second time. The interval between the two isn't given, but it seems quite short, the release of Peter and John noted in 4.23. That means the Jewish authorities had been keeping a close eye on the apostles' activities, especially alarmed when they heard about Ananias and Sapphira. Surely they weren't people off the street but known within the local community. What in the world is wrong with the apostles treating people like that, especially when they want to join? This is clear, unequivocal proof that the apostles are operating some kind of cult. The cures simply were tricks to get people to join. If the Romans got wind of this, might as well call it quits. They'd love any excuse to step in and do what they'd do in the near future, destroy not just Jerusalem but the temple and the Jewish religion.

Note that vs. 17 and onward we have mention of the high priest (*archiereus*) but never his name as in 4.6 with the arrest of Peter and John. For him and all the big guns associated with him at best that experience turned out to be a draw. In the situation at hand we have this unnamed high priest and the Sadducees also as in the first arrest though others are simply designated as "all who were with him." Luke gives the reason for their sudden though not unexpected appearance rendered literally as "filled with jealousy," *pleroo* and *zelos* also as ardor. Such was the view from the side of the apostles, true but perhaps more accurate to say fear...fear of any repercussions by the Romans as noted so often and a constant threat hovering in the background.

Vs. 18 has the apostles—apparently all twelve of them—arrested and thrown into prison rendered by the adjective *demosios* or common, public and not

mentioned with regard to the first arrest. The apostles took this as a golden opportunity to speak of Jesus to any prisoners willing to listen. Overnight they managed to transform that gloomy place into a mini-*ekklesia*. So while this makeshift congregation must have engaged in common singing or the like, it startled the guards who were trying to figure out what was going on. Halfway through the night an angel-messenger or *aggelos* of the Lord opened the prison doors and led them out. Apparently nothing was done for the other prisoners, for once again that would trigger an alarm in the praetorium. However, regardless of the fate of the prisoners, some of whom were scheduled to be executed were transformed which of course attracted wider attention. That in and by itself was an indirect witness just as powerful if not more so than anything the apostles had done thus far.

The angel of the Lord—"Lord" being deliberately added by Luke to assure his readers who's in charge—brings the apostles from prison, they bidding an emotional farewell to the prisoners as they left and hoping to see as many as possible at a later time. As for the guards, they faced a grim fate due to negligence of duty. Without wasting any time, the angel of the Lord directed the twelve to go straight on to the temple which they still considered Ground Zero. There they are to speak to the people (most likely unaware of the recent arrest) words of Life, *rhema* as expression or saying which here is connected with *Zoe*, life in the physical sense. It may seem a bit odd to use this word but then again, it was delivered by the *aggelos* or the messenger meaning directly from God, he not being responsible for having chosen this word marked by a capital letter. *Zoe* can be taken in a number of ways, for example, in contrast to *Pneuma* or Spirit.

One way of considering *Zoe* as indicative of physical life is that precisely attention is to be focused there. In other words, *Zoe* is where Jesus Christ will be found, not in anything abstract. It's as direct and personal as could be. This takes into consideration a temptation common to us all, that is, automatically equating anything abstract with *Pneuma*. Once that association is made, it's easy to manipulate any spiritual teaching to our liking. Fortunately the concreteness of *Zoe* avoids this. Admittedly this can be taken as reading into the situation but doesn't go against the text. As for the apostles, they now have a new way to perceive Jesus Christ, this time directly from an *aggelos*.

The *aggelos* simply led the apostles outside the prison a safe distance away before the apostles made their way to...where else?...the temple. They did so at daybreak, trying to get some rest in the interim but could not for obvious

reasons. It seems by now the apostles were attempting to assemble as much material about their experience with Jesus Christ whom they believe is with them and working through them. Though it's not recorded, we can imagine all twelve not only asking each other about personal recollections of Jesus but busily going about asking people they knew who might have information to add to their own store. It'd come as no surprise that the drive to gather all they could about Jesus would be valuable when they decide to move beyond the confines of Jerusalem.

In the **RSV** vs. 21 continues in three significant ways, if you will. First *de* translated as "now," beginning a second sentence and new paragraph. All contribute to show that the high priest (again, unnamed but Caiaphas) means business. This time he's accompanied with the council and senate of Israel, *sunedrion* and *gerousia*, the former often rendered officially as Sanhedrin and the latter as council of elders (*geron* being an old man). To summon both so early in the morning is unusual, many members not having an idea of what was going on. Again, fear of Roman reprisal had a lot to do with Caiaphas taking this step.

At this stage the authorities had no clue as to what actually took place the previous night. The apostles anticipated this would be their reaction and were completely unfazed as they headed directly to the temple. You'd think the two groups would have crossed paths but did not. Perhaps the *aggelos* who freed the apostles decided to hang around a bit longer to prevent this from happening. During the regular morning rounds the prison officials found the doors opened where the apostles had been while the rest of the prisoners were behind bars. There's no record of asking these men what happened but we can presume if they were asked, their account would not have been believed but dismissed outrightly. And so all the officials involved were at a loss. Everyone was just staring at each other. The verb is *diaporeo* the verb in vs. 24 where the preposition *dia* or through serves to emphasize the confusion.

More important, however, is the fact that all were afraid and confused as to what would come of this. Even more afraid...terrified would be better...are the guards and their boss who would face immediate execution. However, the text doesn't speak of this. Perhaps everyone was too confused. It would come as no surprise that those who worked in the prison would have used this as an occasion to sneak away as quickly as possible. With regard to the apparent escape, the prisoners left behind testified and rightly so that a divine being was involved. While the religious authorities might accept that, try blowing it by

their Roman overloads. They'd use this incident as an excuse to crack down on those involved for negligence.

This state of fear and confusion is resolved but certainly not to the satisfaction of the authorities when someone comes in with a report about the apostles. That is to say, they were recently seen doing exactly what they had been doing before. If allowed to continue, it would pose a direct threat to the established order. Note the two verbs used together concerning the apostles in the temple, *histemi* and *didaskalo* or standing and teaching the people. The former suggests that the apostles were not just there freely of their own accord but fully confident of what they were teaching. Without further ado, the captain and his officers arrested them but took care not to show any violence, *bia* also meaning strength or energy. They were savvy enough to know the power the apostles had over the people who wouldn't hesitate to stone them on the spot. With this in mind, the officials made a pretense that the high priest would like to interview the apostles, this sounding just fine with those who had assembled there.

Vs. 27 begins prosaically enough as "when they had brought them." Although the distance between the temple area and where the authorities were assembled must have been short, surely more than just bringing was involved. We can imagine that as soon as the captain and his guards got away from the people ready to stone them, they took delight at having roughed up the apostles. As for actually depositing them, we have the verb *histemi* or to place, to stand with the preposition *en*, literally "set in the council," not unlike shoving them into position, all lined up and left standing there so as to let fear sink into them. The high priest (still unnamed) proceeds to question them. He must have recognized John, for as Jn 18.15 says (though John isn't mentioned by name), "this disciple was known to the high priest." What this means isn't spelled out which in and by itself is intriguing. So all this was familiar to Caiaphas, too familiar in fact for his liking. It was like a reoccurring nightmare that was unable to stop.

In vs. 28 Caiaphas lets all twelve apostles have it, fully aware of being center stage with his council, senate and other flunkies. He reminds them of their previous meeting when they were strictly charged not to teach "in this name," Caiaphas not being able to utter the proper name Jesus. The verb is *paraggello* where as noted in 1.4 its root *aggello* means to proclaim prefaced with the preposition *para* or beside, this giving a greater sense of urgency. The noun derived from it is *paraggelia* also as an announcement with regard to something

requiring attention. Here it refers to not teaching the people as they had been doing in the temple area. Since it was in the precincts of the Israel's holiest site, such teaching was all the more abominable.

Caiaphas continues in vs. 28, most likely keeping his eyes on John and thinking to himself that somehow somewhere he knew him but couldn't quite put his fingers on it. John must have felt the same, afraid to be recognized and to a certain degree, Peter. After all, Peter had managed to get into the high priest's court when Jesus was arrested and once in, made a commotion resulting in his denial of Jesus. Although such an incident was minor to Caiaphas who was preoccupied with Jesus, he was sharp enough to notice it from the corner of his eye, if you will. As for the situation at hand, Caiaphas accuses all the disciples with having filled Jerusalem not so much with teaching (*didache*) about Jesus as in the temple but more to the point, your teaching, which implies something completely false. Joined with this is the supposed attempt by the apostles to bring "this man's blood upon" the religious authorities. Again, Caiaphas can't take himself to utter the name Jesus, "this man" being a derogatory phrase.

In vs. 29 Peter responds to Caiaphas with that *parresia* or difficult-to-define character of boldness, perhaps the most daring occasion to date, when he says that he and his fellow apostles must obey God instead of men. The verb *peitharcheo* is interesting; it consists of *peitho* or to persuade, to win over and *archo* or to rule, to govern. To be obedient to those in authority is its essential meaning. In the next verse Peter proceeds to make his point similar to being on trial defending himself. He claims that God himself had raised Jesus from the dead whom you...precisely Caiaphas...had condemned to death. This, of course, was a fairly recent occurrence and must have made the high priest feel that he is being put on the spot.

In vs.31 Peter continues his defense, the eleven apostles listening intently as well, for their very lives depended on how he presents his case. His words are familiar. God had exalted Jesus to be at his right hand (*hupsoo*) from where he functions as both Leader and Savior, *Archeros* and *Soter*, the former as having preeminent position and the latter also as a deliverer. This is for the specific function of offering repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel, *metanoia* and *aphesis*: putting one's faculty of *noeo* after (*meta*) or behind or in the past and the act of freeing from something that confines. Peter concludes with saying that we—he and the other apostles plus those associated with them—are witnesses to these things. *Rhema* is the noun here which fundamentally means word-as-expression. Not only that, the Holy Spirit or the *Pneuma* which is *Hagios* joins

in. That has been given to all who obey God and by implication, Jesus Christ, *peitharcho* as in vs. 29. And so in a few words we have a mini-catechism of Jesus' relationship with God, that the two are on the same level.

Vs. 33 conveys the response Peter and the others were expecting: enraged = kill or *diapriomai* = *anairo*. Both verbs are quite vivid. The first means to saw through and the second, to remove or take away. Note the prepositions prefaced to each verb: *dia* and *ana* or through and above connote under destruction as well as reducing to oblivion. Here's where the Pharisee Gamaliel steps in to save the day. He, like many of those present, is described as a teacher of the law, *nomodidaskalos* which combines the two words into one. However, what sets him apart is that he is highly respected not so much by his peers...true...but by "all the people," *timios* also as costly, precious. His very act of standing as mentioned in vs. 34 and ordering the apostles to be put outside is done discreetly and accepted without reservation by all present. As for the two verbs, *anistemi* is more formal, if you will, than *histemi* followed at once by *keleuo* or to order.

Now in vs. 35 Gamaliel addresses the assembly as "men of Israel," a phrase Peter used when he had cured the lame man in 3.12. His initial words are sharp and to the point, namely, that they are to be careful what they intend to do with the apostles, *prosecho* literally to have in the direction towards-which. In other words, Gamaliel knew his confreres all too well, that they were ready to put the apostles to death and hopefully assign Jesus Christ to oblivion. To hell what the people think. He warns them with two examples of recent memory. The first is a certain Theudas who led a gang of some four hundred men. However, he was killed which made his followers disperse. The second is Judas of Galilee who suffered the same fate. Gamaliel doesn't go into details about both because they were known to everyone, chances being high that they were politically motivated. To those listening, Jesus and his followers were similar if not worse because they were engaged in deceiving the people with regard to religious matters; not just that, but they were doing it smack in the holiest place of them all, the temple.

The conclusion was obvious to those assembled, listening sullenly though attentively to their esteemed colleague. Again, Gamaliel isn't afraid to use strong language, knowing that he can get away with it. He bids them to keep their distance from the apostles and leave them alone, the two verbs being *aphistemi* and *aphiemi* which both have the preposition *apo* or from prefaced to them. In other words, very strong words indeed. Next Gamaliel speaks

somewhat abstractly, that is, using the word plan and undertaking with regard to the apostles, *boule* and *ergon* or resolution, decision and work. If both are human in origin, they will literally be loosened down, *kataluo*. On the other hand, should both be of God, forget-about-it. Any attempt at *kataluo* will fail, even with the result of suffering the same loosening-down by opposing God. The adjective is much more powerful and scary, *theomachos* literally as fighting against God.

Fortunately the council took Gamaliel's advice, the verb being *proskaleuo*, another word with the directness of *pros*. Still, they wanted to give the apostles a good drubbing and decided to beat them, *dero* also as to flay which implies they laid it on as hard as they could. Most likely they did this behind the back of Gamaliel who heard about it later and was appalled, rightly so. After the authorities ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, they were let go. Vs. 41 says they departed rejoicing (*chairo* also to be glad) for having been deemed worthy to suffer as they did for the name of Jesus. The verb at hand is *kataxioo*, the preposition *kata* here as in accord with such worthiness as implied by the verb. Although the apostles were genuinely joyful, at the same time they needed medical attention which their supporters did at once. Again, *dero* implies a dreadful beating close to being flayed alive.

And so Chapter Five comes to a conclusion which by now is familiar...agonizingly so...for the authorities who had just dealt with them. Like homing pigeons they headed directly to the place where they felt most at home, the temple. There they resumed teaching and preaching about Jesus Christ, *didasko* and *euaggelizo* essentially being the same. What's significant is that both are done at home (singular) meaning they did it as the homes of those associated with them. Obviously the apostles were from Galilee; thus the phrase *kat' oikon* or literally "according to home" doesn't apply to them in the literal sense. Furthermore, use of the verb *pauo* or to stop, to cease, is a kind of in-your-face gesture to those religious authorities who had maltreated them. To be sure, this conflict is destined to continue if not get worse. It'd come as no surprise that some followers asked the apostles, notably Peter, to discreetly tone it down for the purpose of self-preservation. From what we know of Peter, no way. He wasn't going to water down his words about Jesus Christ.

As for Gamaliel, he fades off the scene but not entirely ⁷. We can be pretty sure he followed the apostles and wanted to see if what he had said to his fellow Pharisees in the recent assembly would come true. In other words, both he and they kept close eye on each other to see if his words about the apostles would prove true or not. In conclusion, surely Gamaliel, being a Pharisee, must have known his fellow Pharisee Nicodemus and possibly Joseph of Arimathea. If so, their contacts must have been on the sly lest they be accused of sedition with regard to their connection with Jesus Christ and his apostles.

⁷Gamaliel is mentioned one more time, albeit indirectly. In 22.3 Paul pays him homage, having been brought up at his feet. The verb is *paideuo*, difficult to translate, because it implies be raised pretty much as a child and being subject to continued education in the sense of continued growth.