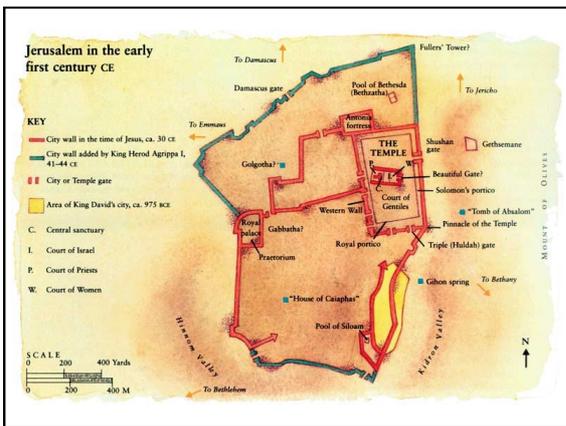


Acts 3-5

- ### Acts 3:1-26
- 2 sections:
 - Peter healing a lame man at Beautiful Gate
 - Peter’s sermon



- ### Acts 3:1-26
- 3:1 – Peter and John remained in Judaism – going to the temple to pray at 3pm
 - Luke’s portraying the disciples as devout and observant Jews, still maintaining Jewish practices?

Acts 3:1-26

Acts 3:2, 7 – ancient physiognomic consciousness

And a man lame from birth was being carried in. People would lay him daily at the gate of the temple called the Beautiful Gate so that he could ask for alms from those entering the temple.

And he took him by the right hand and raised him up

- ### Acts 3:1-26
- The description points to a person that is inner weak moral character, timid, soft, effeminate nature in Greco-Roman world.
 - Jews – might think this man’s condition is the result of sin (see John 9)

Acts 3:1-26

- Medical condition not able to be healed:
 - Hippocrates lists the condition of being lame among the disorders that disable a person permanently.
 - Galen also mentions that this is a medical condition that cannot be healed, “some things are naturally impossible,” and the healing god (Asklepius) “does not attempt these things at all but chooses from among the possible what is best to be done.” (*De usu partium* 11.14)

Acts 3:1-26

- Acts 3:3-5

When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked them for alms. ⁴ Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said, “Look at us.” ⁵ And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them.

 - Look at us – may suggest something is about to happen

Acts 3:1-26

- Acts 3:6 – Peter disappoints the beggar by not giving him any material possessions, but by giving him something more - healing

Acts 3:1-26

- Acts 3:8 – the healing
- Luke describes the effect with 7 verbs: jumping up, he stood and began to walk, and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping (literally, jumping) and praising God.
- This description breaks the physiognomic convention – he behaves like a man!

Acts 3:1-26

- 3:10 – if the man’s condition is not that is not possible to be healed, this healing would naturally attract the following reaction:

“they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.”
- Jesus heals when the god of healing fails (cf John 5)
- Luke’s declaration of “war” with Asklepius?

Acts 3:1-26: Discussion

Compare Peter’s speech in Acts 2:14-36 and Acts 3:11-26.

1. What similarities and differences do you see?
2. What could be some of the significance of the similarities and differences that you detect in these two speeches?

Acts 3:1-26: Reflection

Peter claims that it was not through his “own (power or) godliness/piety” that the lame man was healed (Acts 3:12; see also 14:15).

- Does Peter’s godliness/piety really have so little to do with the healing?
- How far should we take this?
- What did Peter have in mind when he said this?

Acts 4:1-22

- First arrest of the apostles (see 5:17-42 and 12:3-19) as a result of healing the lame man and the proclamation that Jesus is the Messiah
- Arrest presents another opportunity to proclaim Jesus as Messiah

Acts 4:1-22

- 4:1 – note the 3 different groups: οἱ ἱερεῖς καὶ ὁ στρατηγὸς τοῦ ἱεροῦ καὶ οἱ Σαδδουκαῖοι – the priests, the captain of the temple and the Sadducees
- Ἐπίσημι – approach – implies hostile intent of the religious leaders towards Peter and John in contrast to the people who listened to them.

Acts 4:1-22

- 4:2 - the priests, the captain of the temple and the Sadducees were annoyed at: τὸ διδάσκειν αὐτοὺς τὸν λαὸν καὶ καταγγέλλειν ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ τὴν ἀνάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν (“teaching ... proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead”)
- Sadducees denied the resurrection
- Sermon accused the religious authorities as responsible for the death of Jesus

Acts 4:1-22

- Peter and John arrested overnight to be tried the following day
- Acts 4:4 – numbers now 5,000

Acts 4:1-22

- Acts 4:5-22
- The trial convened the following when the Sanhedrin met, comprising the leaders/chief priests, elders/elite Jews, and scribes, with 4 names mentioned (Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family)

Acts 4:1-22

- The interrogation: ““By what power or by what name did you do this?”
- Jewish understanding: only 2 sources of power, God and Beelzebul

Acts 4:1-22

- The reply by Peter:
 - “filled with the Holy Spirit”, Peter offers 2 points:
 1. “a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed” – here, Peter uses irony in his reply, stating that his arrest was of no basis as the healing of the lame man was a good deed that did not deserve an arrest and examination
 2. “let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel” – Peter testifies about the healing done in the name Jesus

Acts 4:1-22

- Peter emphasises:
 1. Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah
 2. The Jewish leaders are responsible for Jesus’ death
 3. Jesus has been raised from the dead

Acts 4:1-22

- Citation of Psalm 118:22 (LXX Psalm 117:22)
 - Last of the Hallel Psalms (Psalm 113-118), and thus the climax.
 - Psalms chanted for praise and thanksgiving especially on Jewish holidays
 - Also quoted by Jesus in the Parable of the Vineyard and the wicked tenant (Luke 20:9-19)

Acts 4:1-22

- Citation of Psalm 118:22 (LXX Psalm 117:22)
 - Context: builders who construct a building reject a stone if they regard it as unsuitable for alignment of building; but other builders may see the stone and recognise it that if it in properly, the stone can be considered a cornerstone
 - This stone rejected was eventually the most important stone in a new building

Acts 4:1-22

- Citation of Psalm 118:22 (LXX Psalm 117:22)
 - Describes the people who doubted the king would be victorious in battle, but with the help of Yahweh, eventually won the victory

Acts 4:1-22

- Citation of Psalm 118:22 (LXX Psalm 117:22)
 - This Psalm is now applied to Jesus and to the Jewish leaders of Jerusalem
- 1. Jesus is that stone that was rejected (ἐξουθενέω -BDAG: to have no use for something as being beneath one's consideration, *reject disdainfully*) by the builders, the leaders who were supposed to build Israel (note – 4:11 “the stone that was rejected by you, the builders”

Acts 4:1-22

- Citation of Psalm 118:22 (LXX Psalm 117:22)
 - This Psalm is now applied to Jesus and to the Jewish leaders of Jerusalem
- 2. Jesus has become the cornerstone – Here Peter asserts that Jesus is vindicated; the Jewish leaders mistaken in crucifying Jesus; and now Jesus is building a new building – something the “builders” failed to do

Acts 4:1-22

- Acts 4:12 – Salvation only in the name of Jesus
- Note the emphasis in the beginning of the verse: καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἄλλῳ οὐδενὶ ἡ σωτηρία - and not is no one else is salvation
- This emphasises that Jesus is the only means of salvation

Acts 4:1-22: Discussion

- Compare Peter's speech in 4:8-12 to his earlier speeches in Acts 2:14-36 and Acts 3:11-26.
 - What similarities and differences do you see?
 - What do you think is the significant of these similarities and differences?

Acts 4:1-22

- The response of the Sanhedrin
 - They noted Peter and John's boldness (παρρησία) – political meaning, able to give free speech without fear and often exposing one to danger. As such, it requires courage and confidence

Acts 4:1-22

- The response of the Sanhedrin
 - They noted they were “uneducated” (ἀγράμματος – BDAG: uneducated, illiterate)
 - They also noted they were also “ordinary/amateurs” (ιδιώτης – BDAG: a person who is relatively unskilled or inexperienced in some activity or field of knowledge, *layperson, amateur* in contrast to an expert or specialist of any kind)
 - Peter and John: uneducated in terms of scribal education

Acts 4:1-22

- The response of the Sanhedrin
 - They were speechless – Fulfillment of the promise of Jesus in Luke 21:15 (for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict)?
 - They asked Peter and John to leave

Acts 4:1-22

- The response of the Sanhedrin
 - They did not know what to do: “What will we do with them/these people?”
 - They were more afraid of how the public will react rather than listening to the truth
 - But they recognised that the people perceived what Peter and John did was a sign, σημεῖον (For it is obvious to all who live in Jerusalem that a notable sign has been done through them; we cannot deny it); but sadly they didn't recognise it

Acts 4:1-22

- The response of the Sanhedrin
 - They threatened Peter and John not to preach
 - 4:18: So they called them and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

Acts 4:1-22

- The reply of Peter and John (4:19-20)
 - Protest against the ban
 - Insist they must speak of what they have seen and heard → rejection of the verdict of the Sanhedrin

Acts 4:1-22

- Further Action of the Sanhedrin (4:21)
 - Issue further threats against Peter and John
 - Release them
 - The reason: “finding no way to punish them because of the people, for all of them praised God for what had happened.”

Acts 4:1-22: Reflections

- The duty to obey God rather than governmental/human authorities in proclaiming the gospel
- The reality of opposition, persecution, threats, and mistreatment

Acts 4:23-31

- The reaction of the community: prayer of thanksgivings and boldness to remain faithful to the cause.

Acts 4:23-31: Reflections

- What can we learn from the contents of the prayer of the believers in Acts 4:23-31? What did they pray for, and what did they not pray for?
- How can this prayer help us in our context today?

Acts 4:31-37: Summary Statement

- Compare Acts 4:31-37 and 2:42-47. What similarities and differences do you see in what characterises the identity of the early Christ movement?

Acts 4:31-37: Summary Statement

- Compare Acts 4:31-37 and 2:42-47. What similarities and differences do you see in what characterises the identity of the early Christ movement?
- Missing: Common meals and common worship
- Additional: Joseph Barnabas – as an example of a wealthy believer, and as a bridge to Acts 5; and to Paul.

Acts 4:31-37: Summary Statement

- Social identity of the early Christ movement
 - Cognitive dimension
 - Emotive dimension
 - Evaluative dimension
 - “we” and “they”

Acts 4: Discussion

- Acts 4:1-31 and 5:17-42 are in some ways parallel texts. Make a list of similarities between the two texts, and also note where second passage goes beyond the first.
 - What is the point of this combination of similarities and differences?

Acts 5:1-16

- First account of how a new community is now confronted with sin and behaviour that would threaten its idyllic beginnings.

Acts 5:1-16: Discuss

- The community that is not perfect is exemplified by Ananias and Sapphira. They are different from Barnabas mentioned earlier.
- Why do you think Luke narrates for us the sharp contrast between Barnabas, and Ananias & Sapphira in Acts 4:36 – 5:11?

Acts 5:1-16

- OT precedents of sudden death:
 1. Fire that consumed Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10:2)
 2. Achan (Joshua 7:19-26)
 3. Abijah (1 Kings 14:1-18)

Acts 5:1-16

- Ananias did what other believers had done – sold property.
- Luke introduces Ananias in 5:1 as a man (ἄνθρωπος) – a typical way Luke introduces characters in 3:2; 8; 27; 10:1; 14:8; 16:9
- Note that when Luke uses “a man” it often typifies an unbeliever or a sympathiser.

Acts 5:1-16

- Question: in light of this, could Ananias not be a real believer? If he is not, what is he trying to do by cheating and lying?
 - To gain favour? To demonstrate benefaction in public to gain honour?

Acts 5:1-16

Peter sees through the deception of Ananias and asks him a series of 6 questions in 5:3-4

1. Why has Satan filled your heart?
2. Why lie to the Holy Spirit?
3. Why keep back part of the proceeds of the land?
4. While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own?
5. And after it was sold, were not the proceeds at your disposal?
6. How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart?

Acts 5:1-16

- Peter's charge: Ananias lies, not to Peter, but to God
- Cf. Prov 6:16-19: There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that hurry to run to evil, a lying witness who testifies falsely, and one who sows discord in a family.

Acts 5:1-16

- Ananias' immediate death follows, resulting in great fear among the people.
- God has judged.
- 3 hours later, Sapphira arrived, not knowing the husband had died
- Peter's question and Sapphira's reply suggest that the couple had already planned to deceive the apostles.
- Her death follows immediately

Acts 5:1-16: Questions

- Are the events surrounding Ananias and Sapphira a norm or a historical event, not to be repeated?
- Is the judgement too severe in this case?
- Why is not there an opportunity for them to repent?

Acts 5:12-16: Summary Statement

- Another summary statement

Acts 5:17-42

- Literary pattern:
- 4:5-22 parallels 5:27-32
 - Confrontation with authorities followed by speech
 - Stories of conflict, persecution, arrest
 - Signs and wonders
 - Testimony about Christ
- Pattern that builds on familiar structure and yet heightens suspense whether the apostles will remain firm in the face of pressure

Acts 5:17-42

- One of the most action packed narrative in Acts
 - lots of verbal forms used (108 verbs cf to 103 nouns)
 - 17 changes of characters who act and speak
 - Change of scenes
 - Geographical movement

Acts 5:17-42

- The arrest (5:17-18) fueled by envy (ζήλος – BDAG: intense negative feelings over another’s achievements or success)
- Sanhedrin not elected by the people – perhaps lost of political power and authority
- High priest responsible for the arrest not mentioned, most likely Caiaphas (see 4:6)

Acts 5:17-42

- The miracle escape (5:19-20)
- The command to stay in Jerusalem after the escape, and not to ran away; and to continue preaching and teaching – no safe haven promised

Acts 5:17-42

- The preaching (5:21a)
 - The apostles defiled the speaking ban
- The Failed Session of the Sanhedrin (5:21b-24)
 - Missing prisoners
 - 5:23: “We found the prison securely locked and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them, we found no one inside.” – a miracle has happened

Acts 5:17-42

- The missing prisoners found preaching (5:25)
- The prisoners brought in and interrogated (5:26-28): “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you are determined to bring this man’s blood on us.”

Acts 5:17-42

- Peter’s Speech (5:29-32)
 - Obedience to God
 - The message of Jesus
 - Jewish’s leader’s responsibility of killing Jesus
 - Resurrection of Jesus
 - Repentance and forgiveness
 - The apostles as witnesses
 - The giving of the Holy Spirit

Acts 5:17-42

- The reaction of the Sanhedrin (5:33)
- The advice of Gamaliel (5:34-39)
 - Reference to Theudas – controversial issue
 - Josephus mentions Theudas (Ant. 20.97-98) but this is dated ca. 44-46CE. Did Luke make a mistake?
 - Possible for another Theudas to carry out acts of rebellion? -> uncertainty
 - Offers a pragmatic solution, not one that is in favour of the apostles

Acts 5:17-42

- The verdict: punishment (whipping) for the apostles and reinforcement for teaching ban (5:40).
- The release of the apostles (5:41-42)
 - Joy
 - Count it worthy to suffer for the sake of Jesus' name
 - They continued to preach and teach the good news, ignoring the warnings issued by the Sanhedrin
 - The beginning of the "parting of ways"?

Acts 5:1-42: Reflections

- Suffering and mission
- Recommended reading: "Is There A Place For Suffering In Mission? Perspectives from Paul's Sufferings in 2 Corinthians," in Dr Tan Kang San, ed., *The Soul of Mission: Perspectives on Christian Leadership, Spirituality and Mission in East Asia; Essays in Appreciation of Dr David Gunaratnam*. Petaling Jaya: Pustaka Sufes, 2007. Pp. 64-78

Acts 5:1-42: Reflections

- Civil disobedience - "Reading Romans 13:1-7 in a Multi-Faith Context: Some Reflections from Malaysia," in Leow Theng Huat, ed., *What Young Asian Theologians Are Thinking*. CSCA Christianity in Southeast Asia Series 7. Singapore: Trinity Theological College, 2014. Pp. 37-47.