

The Book of Acts

EDITOR'S NOTE: *THE BIBLE IS LIKE NO OTHER BOOK, FOR IT HOLDS THE VERY WORDS OF GOD, WHICH HAVE POWER TO CHANGE THE LIVES OF ANY WHO READ IT AND PUT THEIR FAITH IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. PSALM 34:8 SAYS, "OH, TASTE AND SEE THAT THE LORD IS GOOD! BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO TAKES REFUGE IN HIM!" THROUGH THE NEBRASKA LIVING TIMES YOU MAY "TASTE" AND SEE THE GOODNESS OF GOD THROUGH HIS VERY OWN WORDS, EACH MONTH, RIGHT HERE. MAY GOD BLESS YOU WITH HIS WORD!*

(CONTINUED FROM MARCH, 2018)
THE BOOK OF ACTS

CHAPTER 4**PETER AND JOHN BEFORE THE COUNCIL**

1 AND AS THEY WERE SPEAKING TO THE PEOPLE, THE PRIESTS AND THE CAPTAIN OF THE TEMPLE AND THE SADDUCEES CAME UPON THEM, 2 GREATLY ANNOYED BECAUSE THEY WERE TEACHING THE PEOPLE AND PROCLAIMING IN JESUS THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD. 3 AND THEY ARRESTED THEM AND PUT THEM IN CUSTODY UNTIL THE NEXT DAY, FOR IT WAS ALREADY EVENING. 4 BUT MANY OF THOSE WHO HAD HEARD THE WORD BELIEVED, AND THE NUMBER OF THE MEN CAME TO ABOUT FIVE THOUSAND. 5 ON THE NEXT DAY THEIR RULERS AND ELDERS AND SCRIBES GATHERED TOGETHER IN JERUSALEM, 6 WITH ANNAS THE HIGH PRIEST AND CAIAPHAS AND JOHN AND ALEXANDER, AND ALL WHO WERE OF THE HIGH-PRIESTLY FAMILY. 7 AND WHEN THEY HAD SET THEM IN THE MIDST, THEY INQUIRED, "BY WHAT POWER OR BY WHAT NAME DID YOU DO THIS?" 8 THEN PETER, FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, SAID TO THEM, "RULERS OF THE PEOPLE AND ELDERS, 9 IF WE ARE BEING EXAMINED TODAY CONCERNING A GOOD DEED DONE TO A CRIPPLED MAN, BY WHAT MEANS THIS MAN HAS BEEN HEALED, 10 LET IT BE KNOWN TO ALL OF YOU AND TO ALL THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL THAT BY THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST OF NAZARETH, WHOM YOU CRUCIFIED, WHOM GOD RAISED FROM THE DEAD—BY HIM THIS MAN IS STANDING BEFORE YOU WELL. 11 THIS JESUS IS THE STONE THAT WAS REJECTED BY YOU, THE BUILDERS, WHICH HAS BECOME THE CORNERSTONE. 12 AND THERE IS SALVATION IN NO ONE ELSE, FOR THERE IS NO OTHER NAME UNDER HEAVEN GIVEN AMONG MEN BY WHICH WE MUST BE SAVED." 13 NOW WHEN THEY SAW THE BOLDNESS OF PETER AND JOHN, AND PERCEIVED THAT THEY WERE UNEDUCATED, COMMON MEN, THEY WERE ASTONISHED. AND THEY RECOGNIZED THAT THEY HAD BEEN WITH JESUS. 14 BUT SEEING THE MAN WHO WAS HEALED STANDING BESIDE THEM, THEY HAD NOTHING TO SAY IN OPPOSITION. 15 BUT WHEN THEY HAD COMMANDED THEM TO LEAVE THE COUNCIL, THEY CONFERRED WITH ONE ANOTHER, 16 SAYING, "WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH THESE MEN? FOR THAT A NOTABLE SIGN HAS BEEN PERFORMED THROUGH THEM IS EVIDENT TO ALL THE INHABITANTS OF JERUSALEM, AND WE CANNOT DENY IT. 17 BUT IN ORDER

THAT IT MAY SPREAD NO FURTHER AMONG THE PEOPLE, LET US WARN THEM TO SPEAK NO MORE TO ANYONE IN THIS NAME." 18 SO THEY CALLED THEM AND CHARGED THEM NOT TO SPEAK OR TEACH AT ALL IN THE NAME OF JESUS. 19 BUT PETER AND JOHN ANSWERED THEM, "WHETHER IT IS RIGHT IN THE SIGHT OF GOD TO LISTEN TO YOU RATHER THAN TO GOD, YOU MUST JUDGE, 20 FOR WE CANNOT BUT SPEAK OF WHAT WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD." 21 AND WHEN THEY HAD FURTHER THREATENED THEM, THEY LET THEM GO, FINDING NO WAY TO PUNISH THEM, BECAUSE OF THE PEOPLE, FOR ALL WERE PRAISING GOD FOR WHAT HAD HAPPENED. 22 FOR THE MAN ON WHOM THIS SIGN OF HEALING WAS PERFORMED WAS MORE THAN FORTY YEARS OLD.

THE BELIEVERS PRAY FOR BOLDNESS

23 WHEN THEY WERE RELEASED, THEY WENT TO THEIR FRIENDS AND REPORTED WHAT THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND THE ELDERS HAD SAID TO THEM. 24 AND WHEN THEY HEARD IT, THEY LIFTED THEIR VOICES TOGETHER TO GOD AND SAID, "SOVEREIGN LORD, WHO MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA AND EVERYTHING IN THEM, 25 WHO THROUGH THE MOUTH OF OUR FATHER DAVID, YOUR SERVANT, SAID BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, "WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE, AND THE PEOPLES PLOT IN VAIN? 26 THE KINGS OF THE EARTH SET THEMSELVES, AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER, AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS ANOINTED"— 27 FOR TRULY IN THIS CITY THERE WERE GATHERED TOGETHER AGAINST YOUR HOLY SERVANT JESUS, WHOM YOU ANOINTED, BOTH HEROD AND PONTIUS PILATE, ALONG WITH THE GENTILES AND THE PEOPLES OF ISRAEL, 28 TO DO WHATEVER YOUR HAND AND YOUR PLAN HAD PREDESTINED TO TAKE PLACE. 29 AND NOW, LORD, LOOK UPON THEIR THREATS AND GRANT TO YOUR SERVANTS TO CONTINUE TO SPEAK YOUR WORD WITH ALL BOLDNESS, 30 WHILE YOU STRETCH OUT YOUR HAND TO HEAL, AND SIGNS AND WONDERS ARE PERFORMED THROUGH THE NAME OF YOUR HOLY SERVANT JESUS." 31 AND WHEN THEY HAD PRAYED, THE PLACE IN WHICH THEY WERE GATHERED TOGETHER WAS SHAKEN, AND THEY WERE ALL FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CONTINUED TO SPEAK THE WORD OF GOD WITH BOLDNESS.

THEY HAD EVERYTHING IN COMMON

32 NOW THE FULL NUMBER OF THOSE WHO BELIEVED WERE OF ONE HEART AND

SOUL, AND NO ONE SAID THAT ANY OF THE THINGS THAT BELONGED TO HIM WAS HIS OWN, BUT THEY HAD EVERYTHING IN COMMON. 33 AND WITH GREAT POWER THE APOSTLES WERE GIVING THEIR TESTIMONY TO THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD JESUS, AND GREAT GRACE WAS UPON THEM ALL. 34 THERE WAS NOT A NEEDY PERSON AMONG THEM, FOR AS MANY AS WERE OWNERS OF LANDS OR HOUSES SOLD THEM AND BROUGHT THE PROCEEDS OF WHAT WAS SOLD 35 AND LAID IT AT THE APOSTLES' FEET, AND IT WAS DISTRIBUTED TO EACH AS ANY HAD NEED. 36 THUS JOSEPH, WHO WAS ALSO CALLED BY THE APOSTLES BARNABAS (WHICH MEANS SON OF ENCOURAGEMENT), A LEVITE, A NATIVE OF CYPRUS, 37 SOLD A FIELD THAT BELONGED TO HIM AND BROUGHT THE MONEY AND LAID IT AT THE APOSTLES' FEET.

CHAPTER 5**ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA**

1 BUT A MAN NAMED ANANIAS, WITH HIS WIFE SAPPHIRA, SOLD A PIECE OF PROPERTY, 2 AND WITH HIS WIFE'S KNOWLEDGE HE KEPT BACK FOR HIMSELF SOME OF THE PROCEEDS AND BROUGHT ONLY A PART OF IT AND LAID IT AT THE APOSTLES' FEET. 3 BUT PETER SAID, "ANANIAS, WHY HAS SATAN FILLED YOUR HEART TO LIE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT AND TO KEEP BACK FOR YOURSELF PART OF THE PROCEEDS OF THE LAND? 4 WHILE IT REMAINED UNSOLD, DID IT NOT REMAIN YOUR OWN? AND AFTER IT WAS SOLD, WAS IT NOT AT YOUR DISPOSAL? WHY IS IT THAT YOU HAVE CONTRIVED THIS DEED IN YOUR HEART? YOU HAVE NOT LIED TO MAN BUT TO GOD." 5 WHEN ANANIAS HEARD THESE WORDS, HE FELL DOWN AND BREATHED HIS LAST. AND GREAT FEAR CAME UPON ALL WHO HEARD OF IT. 6 THE YOUNG MEN ROSE AND WRAPPED HIM UP AND CARRIED HIM OUT AND BURIED HIM. 7 AFTER AN INTERVAL OF ABOUT THREE HOURS HIS WIFE CAME IN, NOT KNOWING WHAT HAD HAPPENED. 8 AND PETER SAID TO HER, "TELL ME WHETHER YOU SOLD THE LAND FOR SO MUCH." AND SHE SAID, "YES, FOR SO MUCH." 9 BUT PETER SAID TO HER, "HOW IS IT THAT YOU HAVE AGREED TOGETHER TO TEST THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD? BEHOLD, THE FEET OF THOSE WHO HAVE BURIED YOUR HUSBAND ARE AT THE DOOR, AND THEY WILL CARRY YOU OUT." 10 IMMEDIATELY SHE FELL DOWN AT HIS FEET AND BREATHED HER LAST. WHEN THE YOUNG MEN CAME IN THEY FOUND HER DEAD, AND THEY CARRIED HER OUT AND BURIED HER BESIDE HER HUSBAND.

11 AND GREAT FEAR CAME UPON THE WHOLE CHURCH AND UPON ALL WHO HEARD OF THESE THINGS.

MANY SIGNS AND WONDERS DONE

12 NOW MANY SIGNS AND WONDERS WERE REGULARLY DONE AMONG THE PEOPLE BY THE HANDS OF THE APOSTLES. AND THEY WERE ALL TOGETHER IN SOLOMON'S PORTICO. 13 NONE OF THE REST DARED JOIN THEM, BUT THE PEOPLE HELD THEM IN HIGH ESTEEM. 14 AND MORE THAN EVER BELIEVERS WERE ADDED TO THE LORD, MULTITUDES OF BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, 15 SO THAT THEY EVEN CARRIED OUT THE SICK INTO THE STREETS AND LAID THEM ON COTS AND MATS, THAT AS PETER CAME BY AT LEAST HIS SHADOW MIGHT FALL ON SOME OF THEM. 16 THE PEOPLE ALSO GATHERED FROM THE TOWNS AROUND JERUSALEM, BRINGING THE SICK AND THOSE AFFLICTED WITH UNCLEAN SPIRITS, AND THEY WERE ALL HEALED.

THE APOSTLES ARRESTED AND FREED

17 BUT THE HIGH PRIEST ROSE UP, AND ALL WHO WERE WITH HIM (THAT IS, THE PARTY OF THE SADDUCEES), AND FILLED WITH JEALOUSY 18 THEY ARRESTED THE APOSTLES AND PUT THEM IN THE PUBLIC PRISON. 19 BUT DURING THE NIGHT AN ANGEL OF THE LORD OPENED THE PRISON DOORS AND BROUGHT THEM OUT, AND SAID, 20 "GO AND STAND IN THE TEMPLE AND SPEAK TO THE PEOPLE ALL THE WORDS OF THIS LIFE." 21 AND WHEN THEY HEARD THIS, THEY ENTERED THE TEMPLE AT DAYBREAK AND BEGAN TO TEACH.

NOW WHEN THE HIGH PRIEST CAME, AND THOSE WHO WERE WITH HIM, THEY CALLED TOGETHER THE COUNCIL, ALL THE SENATE OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, AND SENT TO THE PRISON TO HAVE THEM BROUGHT. 22 BUT WHEN THE OFFICERS CAME, THEY DID NOT FIND THEM IN THE PRISON, SO THEY RETURNED AND REPORTED, 23 "WE FOUND THE PRISON SECURELY LOCKED AND THE GUARDS STANDING AT THE DOORS, BUT WHEN WE OPENED THEM WE FOUND NO ONE INSIDE." 24 NOW WHEN THE CAPTAIN OF THE TEMPLE AND THE CHIEF PRIESTS HEARD THESE WORDS, THEY WERE GREATLY PERPLEXED ABOUT THEM, WONDERING WHAT THIS WOULD COME TO. 25 AND SOMEONE CAME AND TOLD THEM, "LOOK! THE MEN WHOM YOU PUT IN PRISON ARE STANDING IN THE TEMPLE AND TEACHING THE PEOPLE." 26 THEN THE CAPTAIN WITH THE OFFICERS WENT AND BROUGHT THEM, BUT NOT BY FORCE, FOR THEY WERE AFRAID OF BEING STONED BY THE PEOPLE.

27 AND WHEN THEY HAD BROUGHT

THEM, THEY SET THEM BEFORE THE COUNCIL. AND THE HIGH PRIEST QUESTIONED THEM, 28 SAYING, "WE STRICTLY CHARGED YOU NOT TO TEACH IN THIS NAME, YET HERE YOU HAVE FILLED JERUSALEM WITH YOUR TEACHING, AND YOU INTEND TO BRING THIS MAN'S BLOOD UPON US." 29 BUT PETER AND THE APOSTLES ANSWERED, "WE MUST OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MEN. 30 THE GOD OF OUR FATHERS RAISED JESUS, WHOM YOU KILLED BY HANGING HIM ON A TREE. 31 GOD EXALTED HIM AT HIS RIGHT HAND AS LEADER AND SAVIOR, TO GIVE REPENTANCE TO ISRAEL AND FORGIVENESS OF SINS. 32 AND WE ARE WITNESSES TO THESE THINGS, AND SO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHOM GOD HAS GIVEN TO THOSE WHO OBEY HIM." 33 WHEN THEY HEARD THIS, THEY WERE ENRAGED AND WANTED TO KILL THEM. 34 BUT A PHARISEE IN THE COUNCIL NAMED GAMALIEL, A TEACHER OF THE LAW HELD IN HONOR BY ALL THE PEOPLE, STOOD UP AND GAVE ORDERS TO PUT THE MEN OUTSIDE FOR A LITTLE WHILE. 35 AND HE SAID TO THEM, "MEN OF ISRAEL, TAKE CARE WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO DO WITH THESE MEN. 36 FOR BEFORE THESE DAYS THEUDAS ROSE UP, CLAIMING TO BE SOMEBODY, AND A NUMBER OF MEN, ABOUT FOUR HUNDRED, JOINED HIM. HE WAS KILLED, AND ALL WHO FOLLOWED HIM WERE DISPERSED AND CAME TO NOTHING. 37 AFTER HIM JUDAS THE GALILEAN ROSE UP IN THE DAYS OF THE CENSUS AND DREW AWAY SOME OF THE PEOPLE AFTER HIM. HE TOO PERISHED, AND ALL WHO FOLLOWED HIM WERE SCATTERED. 38 SO IN THE PRESENT CASE I TELL YOU, KEEP AWAY FROM THESE MEN AND LET THEM ALONE, FOR IF THIS PLAN OR THIS UNDERTAKING IS OF MAN, IT WILL FAIL; 39 BUT IF IT IS OF GOD, YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO OVERTHROW THEM. YOU MIGHT EVEN BE FOUND OPPOSING GOD!" SO THEY TOOK HIS ADVICE, 40 AND WHEN THEY HAD CALLED IN THE APOSTLES, THEY BEAT THEM AND CHARGED THEM NOT TO SPEAK IN THE NAME OF JESUS, AND LET THEM GO. 41 THEN THEY LEFT THE PRESENCE OF THE COUNCIL, REJOICING THAT THEY WERE COUNTED WORTHY TO SUFFER DISHONOR FOR THE NAME. 42 AND EVERY DAY, IN THE TEMPLE AND FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE, THEY DID NOT CEASE TEACHING AND PREACHING THAT THE CHRIST IS JESUS.

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