

OpenTheo

Acts 5:1 - 5:42



Acts - Steve Gregg

In this exposition on Acts 5, Steve Gregg highlights the early church's close fellowship and selfless generosity towards one another. He also emphasizes the serious consequences of spiritual hypocrisy and the importance of obedience and holiness in the eyes of God. Throughout the narrative, the apostles remain steadfast in their preaching of the gospel despite opposition and persecution, ultimately resulting in the growth and spread of the Christian movement beyond Jerusalem. The theme of trusting in God's sovereignty and seeking to live out one's faith in community remains a pertinent message for modern believers.

Transcript

Turning now to Acts chapter 5. Chapters 3 through 5 are like one flowing narrative. This is not true of the chapters before or immediately following. In many cases, one chapter contains a whole account, like the day of Pentecost was in one chapter.

But when we started with chapter 3, with the healing of the lame man at the beautiful gate of the temple, that flowed into the sermon of Peter, which flowed into chapter 4, the response to the sermon, which was twofold. Many people got saved, but also some people got irritated. And so the apostles got arrested.

They were threatened. They testified to Christ. Nothing decisive could have been charged against them.

They were told, don't preach anymore in the name of Jesus. And they were released with those threats. And then at the end of chapter 4, we revisit the community life of the church at that time, after they had prayed with the other Christians about boldness, the need for boldness because of the threat.

And by the way, their prayer was mightily answered in that they were filled with the spirit of fresh. The place they prayed in was shaken. Now, we shouldn't understand that to have been like a normal earthquake because the Bible is very familiar with earthquakes.

For example, when Jesus died on the cross and it went dark, the Bible says there was a great earthquake. Earthquakes are called earthquakes in the Bible. In this case, just the house they were in was shaken.

The earth didn't shake, just the building shook. And it's not entirely clear how to understand that because I don't think we have other instances of that phenomenon in Scripture. But it was certainly God's way of saying, he's heard the prayer.

There is a response. It might even, although we would be guessing beyond justification, I suppose, that it may be that the shaking of the house would be symbolic of the whole shaking of the house of Israel, which was the whole Jewish system that was persecuting them was going to be shaken down and was going to be dissolved, which did happen. The house they were in didn't crumble down, but the shaking might have been an emblem of that.

Yeah, you're shaking things up here. And these, your opponents, their whole world is going to be shaken. After all, that very language is used by the writer of Hebrews in Hebrews chapter 12 when he's talking about the destruction of the temple system.

He says that God's going to shake all things, shake heaven and earth, so that the things that can be shaken will be destroyed and the things that cannot be shaken will remain. He says, and we have received a kingdom that cannot be shaken, cannot be destroyed. And so it will endure beyond the fall of Jerusalem.

And it did. The writer was writing before the fall of Jerusalem, so he was anticipating it. But the whole shaking things up is a term that the writer of Hebrews associates with the fall of Jerusalem.

So the shaking of the house they were in might conceivably have been an emblem of God's suggesting. Yeah, you guys are praying about this powerful Jewish establishment that's breathing down your necks and threatening to kill you. Well, they're on shaky ground.

The whole house of Israel is going to be shaken down. And with the symbol of the shaking of the house they were in, perhaps, I say it's only perhaps an unjustified speculation. But it happened, it's recorded, and it must have had some meaning.

And there is no meaning of it described for us. So any meaning we assign would be a speculation. And then it says, of course, in verse 31 of chapter four, that they spoke the word with boldness, which is the very thing they prayed for.

So their prayer was answered. They were refilled, refreshed in the spirit. There was this visible sign of the house shaking, sort of like on Pentecost.

There was the sound of a wind and image of the flames of fire over their head. And now

they are speaking boldly the very thing that they were commanded not to do. Now, they are going to be arrested again for this, and that will come up in chapter five, but not immediately.

In chapter five, we have essentially two parts. One is the story of Ananias and Sapphira, which is set in the context of the closing of chapter four, where at the end of chapter four, Luke has retold us what he said in chapter two, that the early church had a life of sharing material goods. No one considered that what he possessed was his own.

Everything belongs to Jesus now, and we are all stewards of what belongs to him. And therefore, his concerns have got to become our concerns for the dispersal of funds at our disposal. They're not ours.

They're his. We're managers of somebody else's property. That's what the Bible teaches, and that's how they understood it.

So, since God is concerned for the poor, and he's got as much concern for the needs of the poor Christians as for anyone else, maybe more, those who had money, knowing it was not their own, gave what they could to help the poor, because that is what Jesus would want done with his money. That's how they understood it. Now, notice they weren't giving to support a church building or salaries of ministers.

You give money at your church, I suppose, and, well, you should if you benefit from your church. Your church might even teach that you owe them some money, that you owe them 10% of what you make. If they say that, they're going beyond what the Scripture says, because the New Testament doesn't say anything remotely like that.

But, of course, the Old Testament says that the Jews were supposed to give 10% to the Levites, but there's no such command in the New Testament concerning the support of the church. What the New Testament does say is that, of course, Galatians 6.6 says those who are taught in the Word should share with those who teach, so that your pastor, if he's preaching the gospel, you should be concerned that his finances are adequate. He doesn't need a salary, necessarily.

You could just send him a check in the mail or something like that, but to respond in material things to someone who's ministered spiritual things, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9, isn't a normal and reasonable thing. So that the money we have, one thing it can be used for, and no doubt should, is for the support of the preaching of the Word of God, namely in the support of the people who do it, but also, and more often, the Bible speaks of the need to help the poor. Christ's primary concern when it comes to financial dispersal is to help the legitimate poor, and I won't go into this in detail, but certainly this is what we find going on in the end of chapter 4, that those who were poor had everything provided.

There's no one among them that lacked because those who had resources were stewarding them for God and gave to the poor as God would wish for His money to be used that way. Now, at the end of chapter 4, there was a notable example, Barnabas. He was notable, I say, because they noted him, but there's nothing extremely unique about what is said about him, but that he had some land, he sold it, he brought it to the apostles' feet, but this is what Luke has already said people were doing.

So, Barnabas is just given as an exhibit A of this general tendency in the church. He's given as an example of someone that was known to Luke who had done this very thing. Luke probably didn't know personally very many people in Jerusalem, although he had been to Jerusalem with Paul later on, but Luke was not from Jerusalem, and he didn't join the apostles until late, until Paul's second missionary journey, and then he began to be acquainted with people like Paul and Barnabas, frankly.

Barnabas and Paul were both at the Church of Antioch, and although we don't know for sure, there is an assumption that most scholars make that Luke was from Antioch. If so, then he would have known both Paul and Barnabas, who ministered for a year in Antioch before they were sent out on their first missionary journey, so Luke would be acquainted with Barnabas. And Barnabas might be one of the only people he knew who had been in Jerusalem in the early days before Luke was around, and who had done this thing, and he gives Barnabas as an example of what was fairly commonplace.

But then in chapter 5, he gives an example of people who pretended to be this generous, but they really weren't, and we read it at the beginning of chapter 5, And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, this was a conspiracy between them, and brought a certain part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet, obviously pretending this is what they had received for the sale of their land, they brought it to the apostles as if they were being like Barnabas, as if they were being like the generous people. We are very self-giving, we are very generous with our things, here's the whole amount that we gave, just like people tended to give. But they weren't giving the whole amount, secretly, they were holding back some, but they wanted to be viewed by the church as being as generous as anyone else, as committed as anyone else, as non-materialistic as anyone else, but they weren't.

This is an act of hypocrisy on their part, and that's what is the problem. But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? So it was land. While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God.

Now, several things here. We're not told how Peter knew about this ruse. We simply read that Ananias brought this money to the apostles as if giving the proceeds for the sale, and it gets rebuked by Peter.

Peter knew of the ruse without being told by Ananias. Ananias, in fact, would not have told, he was concealing it. Now, we're not told how Peter knew.

It's not impossible that somebody else knew of the ruse and had informed Peter. So when Ananias showed up, Peter knew about it and rebuked him for it. Although I think the way the story is told, the impression is given that Peter knew this by revelation, by what charismatic people like to call a word of knowledge.

Paul, when he lists the gifts of the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12, the second gift he names out of nine that he lists is the word of knowledge. He says to one is given the word of wisdom, to another is given the word of knowledge, to another faith, and so forth. Now, the word of knowledge, Paul never tells us what that is.

In fact, there is no other reference in the Bible to the phrase word of knowledge. So we have a single occurrence of this expression, word of knowledge, in a list of gifts. Paul does not explain what he means by the term, but there is a phenomenon seen repeatedly in the Old Testament and the New among prophets and other spiritual people.

Where they did know things that they could only know if it was revealed to them. It was a bit of knowledge that they had that was not naturally known, but supernaturally revealed to them. We see this notably in the case of Elisha, knowing that his servant Gehazi had struck a deal with Naaman the Syrian.

After the man had been healed of leprosy, he'd offered money to Elisha and Elisha turned it down. And so the servant of Elisha, being a greedy man, waited till the man had headed home to Syria. And then he went and overtook him and said, Oh, my master made it.

He changed his mind. Some guests have arrived. He needs a few things.

Could we, after all, have that gift that you offered? And he concealed it. He was trying to fool Elisha. And he concealed the money he took.

And then he walked home whistling like nothing was wrong. And Elisha said, Gehazi, is this the time to be seeking land and vineyards and prosperity? You know, the nation was in a crisis. He's basically saying, he said, because you've deceived me, because you did this, Naaman's leprosy is going to cleave to you forever.

All the days of your life. And so Gehazi became a leper after that. But how did Elisha know? Elisha said, did not my heart go out with you when the chariot turned? Did I? I saw this happening.

But obviously Gehazi had done it when it was far enough away that Elisha wouldn't actually see it. It's like when Jesus saw Nathanael in John chapter one, he says, I saw you

when you're under the fig tree. Well, there's nothing.

Any number of people might have seen him under the fig tree without any special revelation. But it was obvious to Nathanael that Jesus hadn't been anywhere near that fig tree. And that Jesus was professing to have seen something that Jesus would not have naturally been able to know or see.

And so he fell and said, you are the son of God. You're the king of Israel. That's what he said.

And so these are cases of word of knowledge. At least that's the term that most people think Paul is referring to when he uses the term word of knowledge to this phenomenon. It's something that prophets did.

And it might even be just a specie of prophecy, although prophecy is listed as a separate gift. But when when Jesus said to the woman as well, you're right to say you have no husband. You've had five husbands.

The man you have now is not your husband. She said, oh, so I see you're a prophet. You know, this would be a case of the same phenomenon.

Knowing something that you haven't been told, it's supernaturally known. Oh, you're a prophet. It was Elisha was a prophet.

The people who had this in the Bible often were prophets. And it was a function of them being prophets that they could see this. Peter probably experienced that phenomenon here, which there's no indication that someone had informed him about this, although some could have.

But the story is told as if that wasn't the case. And so Peter probably knew supernaturally. And that stunned Ananias to be sure that Peter would catch him in this.

Second thing I'd like to point out is that Peter said that Satan had filled his heart. Satan is the father of lies. And Ananias was lying.

Ananias was deceiving. He was acting under the influence of Satan. Now, whether he means to say that Ananias was actually possessed by the devil, as we seemingly are told it was Judas Iscariot, or whether it just means that the persuasiveness of Satan.

Satan was the agent through whom the persuasion came to his heart and his heart was filled by Satan with this device of deception. I don't know. But he does say you've lied to the Holy Spirit, which is a strange thing to say.

Peter said he could have said you lied to me. But he says you lied to the Holy Spirit. I think that behind that is the assumption that the apostles were the agents of the Holy Spirit.

And by lying to them, you're lying to the agents of the Holy Spirit. But then he says at the end of this statement, you've lied to God. You've not lied to men, but to God, which indicates that the Holy Spirit is God.

Now, that doesn't surprise anyone who's a Trinitarian because that's what the doctrine of the Trinity teaches. God is three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each is God.

But there are not very many passages in the Bible that speak of the Holy Spirit as being God. This is one of the passages that Trinitarians use to establish the idea that the Holy Spirit is God. Because, you know, it's basically a doctrine made up of proof texts from a lot of different places.

This is one of the seemingly unmistakable places where Peter referred to the Holy Spirit as God. You lied to the Holy Spirit. You didn't lie to men.

You lied to God. The Holy Spirit is God, in other words. Now, the other thing I wanted to point out in what Peter said to him is, while the property was yours, was it not in your control? Didn't you have the right to do with it what you want to? The church did not mandate that people sell their property and bring it to the apostles.

That was something that was clearly being done out of the love of Christ. When we're told twice that those of the church would sell their possessions and give to the poor, we're to understand that this is an example of the Holy Spirit's fruit of love manifesting in this kind of behavior. Remember what John said in 1 John chapter 2 or 3, he said, Whoever has this world's good and sees his brother has need and shuts up his bowels of compassion for him, how does the love of God dwell in him? If you see your brother of need and you don't do anything, how can you have the love of God? The point is that the love of God is manifested by acting on behalf of those who are in need when you see them.

If you see a need and you don't help, do you love him? How could that be love? And therefore, when we read of the early church actually doing so, helping the poor, we're to understand this is the love of God that was manifested in their lives. It was voluntary. It's what they wanted to do.

There was no mandate saying, OK, you become a Christian, sell your stuff, bring it here to Peter and the rest. We'll manage it. That was something that was an ad hoc policy that happened because a bunch of believers in Christ who happen to love each other saw that some had needs and some had extras.

The ones that actually said, I know, I've got to, I can sell this extra piece of land to help that people. This was the way that people spontaneously acted in a family situation, which is what the church was. It was not a religious order.

It was not a religious system. It was a family. It was children of God.

And brothers and sisters, that's how they're seen. And but Ananias and Sapphira were not acting in a brotherly way. And they weren't required to specifically.

He said, when you had the property before you sold it, it was yours, right? It's in your control. Interesting that he puts it that way. Because I put it here.

He says, and when it was sold, was it not in your own control? Remember, no one said that what they had was their own. But they did have control over it. They were stewards.

They were managers of it. It was somebody else's property, namely God's. But they were the ones in control.

They didn't have to do anything. The apostles were not in control of the church finances. The individuals who owned them were in control.

And there was no requirement. So we can see that this was voluntary. But even though it was not required.

It was there was kind of a social pressure, kind of a peer pressure. If you had extra property and a lot of the respected brothers and sisters were selling their extra property in order to help the poor. And you wanted to be seen as, you know, on the cutting edge of spirituality.

Then, you know, you're not gonna be sitting on that property without a little embarrassment. And so I think they had some peer pressure. I think they wanted to look like they were as spiritual as everyone else.

That they were as loving toward the poor and love the poor more than they love their possessions. So they, in other words, were presenting a false face. Presenting themselves as more spiritual than they were.

It's exactly what the Pharisees did and for which Jesus rebuked them. Jesus called them hypocrites, which is a Greek word that means actors. The word hypocrite, hypokrites in the Greek means an actor in a play.

Interestingly, before Jesus' time, hypocrite was not a bad word. Ever since the time of Christ, if you call someone a hypocrite, that's clearly an insult. The word hypocrite, which Jesus used in addressing the Pharisees, in the Greek language was not a bad word.

It was not an insult. It was simply a job title. There were people who were professional actors in the Greek dramas.

The word for an actor was a hypocrite. When Jesus, however, calls a religious person a play actor, that's a little, that stings a little bit. Because you're pretending to be something that you're not.

Now, when you go to a play and the actors are pretending to be someone they're not, well, that's what you expect them to do. That's their job. You're not critical of them for doing that.

But when you're pretending to be spiritual, trying to put on a face of being righteous, and you really aren't. You're just playing a role. That is very offensive to God.

It would appear that hypocrisy like that was far more offensive to Jesus than the sins of the tax collectors and sinners and even prostitutes that he ate with without those kinds of stinging rebukes. Certainly Jesus was against those sins, all sins. But the point is, the tax collectors and sinners that Jesus ate with and so forth, they knew they were sinners and they weren't pretending to be something else.

And no doubt they were in the process of repenting. But the Pharisees were not. They were pretending to be what they were not.

And that's what Ananias and Sapphira were doing, pretending to be something. Peter's rebuke is very strong against Ananias and Sapphira because they are being hypocrites. They are seeking to deceive.

Now, they did not succeed in deceiving because the Holy Spirit probably revealed to Peter that this was the case. And his rebuke was not that they had not given the whole amount. Certainly their failure to give the whole amount is the occasion for the rebuke, but it is something more than that they didn't give the whole amount.

It's that they were pretending to be doing more. They were pretending to be fully dedicated in ways that others had shown themselves to be. They didn't want to be seen as less spiritual than others or less generous.

But they were. They were less generous. They were less spiritual.

And that's the point. They were putting on a mask of spirituality that was not theirs. Now, what happened here was rather dramatic, as we see.

Then Ananias, hearing these words, this is Acts 5.5, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things. And the young men rose up and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him.

In the language of the old king, James says they wound him up. The young men came and wound him up. I remember reading that one and thinking, oh, he wasn't dead.

They just need to wind him up again. It was a mechanical toy. Now, they wrapped him up as they would prepare a corpse to be buried, is what this means, and carried him out and buried him.

Now, it's interesting, three hours later his wife comes and she hasn't been informed

about it. Now, you'd think that as soon as she reentered the Christian community, from wherever she was for three hours, that they'd say, did you hear? Your husband's dead. He's even buried.

You missed the burial. But they didn't inform her. It may be that there was, you know, fear came on everybody.

People were thinking, maybe we're not supposed to, we better wait for instructions about this. People might have just hushed it up and just waited for her to find out, however the apostles wanted her to find out. But somehow she came back unknowing her husband had died three hours earlier.

About three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened, and Peter answered her, tell me whether you sold the land for so much, and apparently he quoted the price. And she said, yes, for that much. Then Peter said to her, how is it that you have agreed together to test the spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door.

They will carry you out. Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead and carried her out and buried her by her own husband.

So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things. It's clear that he gave Sapphira, the wife, a chance to come clean. He didn't give Ananias a chance to come clean.

He just rebuked him. But I don't think Peter knew he was going to drop dead. I mean, some people say, how dare Peter strike this man dead? I don't think Peter struck him dead.

The man died. And I don't know if Peter knew that was going to happen or not. He just died.

But Peter figured out that if his wife didn't do the same thing, probably she's going to die too. He was able to announce that to her. But he first gave her a chance to come clean.

Is this really the amount you sold your property for? She could have said, you know, no, it isn't. We lied about that. And then I'm sure she would have had a different fate.

He gave her a chance to repent of the ruse. But she didn't. She stuck with it.

She said, well, I don't know why you guys conspired to do this, but your husband died. You're going to die. Now, again, Peter, we have no reason to believe that Peter is being hateful toward them or wants them to die.

Peter did not have the power to just go around and strike people dead. If he had that, he

could have done that in Sanhedrin and solved all their problems. To strike all those guys dead.

You're going to die. You're enemies of Christ. You never know when God's going to strike somebody dead.

And it's amazing the people that he doesn't strike dead. There are certain opponents of Christianity that seem to live very long and have a long career of opposition. Other people, God doesn't give them that many chances.

Now, I guess we have to ask, was this God or was it a coincidence? Now, I have no doubt that it was God. I have no doubt that Luke is presenting it for us to believe it was God, that this was a judgment of God. And the fear of God came on everybody.

Twice it says it. They all saw it as an act of God, and there's every reason to. There are some people I know who are squeamish about God doing this kind of thing.

They say, oh, God's too mean. He wouldn't be that mean to do that. And I've heard people argue that they just had a heart attack.

That they were kind of nervous about being found out. And then they were found out, and suddenly they had a heart attack. Both of them? How many times have you had shocking news given to you, and you didn't fall down dead? I don't think it's very common for people to drop dead because of shock.

I did hear of a case recently of a woman who found out her husband was having an affair. So she got a watermelon and put a life-size picture of the woman's face on it and put it in the refrigerator. It looked like her head was in the refrigerator, and when her husband opened the door, I don't know if he died, but he certainly fainted.

Thought it was the head of his mistress in the refrigerator. But, I mean, there are things shocking enough to cause people to pass out, and no doubt to die too. But let's face it, it's pretty rare.

If it happened to Ananias, the chances it would also happen to his wife would be exceedingly rare. And there's no suggestion that anyone would be afraid. Why would great fear come on people if someone had a heart attack normally? That doesn't mean I'm in danger of having a heart attack.

I heard a guy had a heart attack. Boy, am I scared. Maybe I'll have one too.

Obviously, that's not how it was understood. It was not a natural event. It was a judgment of God.

And just to make it unambiguous, there's another case in the book of Acts of God striking someone dead. And that is, of course, Herod in Acts chapter 12. When he's speaking and

they acclaim him to be a god and he doesn't give God the glory, it says, the angel of the Lord struck him and he was eaten with worms and died.

Now, the god who would have his angel strike Herod and have him eaten with worms and died, it would not be out of character for him to strike down somebody somewhat less gruesomely as when Ananias and Sapphira apparently died very suddenly, just took their last breath and they're done. Now, why did God do that in this case? Because, I mean, let's face it, it doesn't seem like what they did was one of the greatest sins that have ever been committed by people or even by Christians. If their sin is that they pretended to be more devoted than they were, they pretended to be more generous than they were, how many Christians, maybe even in this room, have at some time or another pretended to be more spiritual or more generous than they were? I remember Chuck Smith used to give the example of the song, Take My Life and Let It Be.

There's a line in there that says, Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold. He said if God was still striking down people for the same sin of Ananias and Sapphira, when they sang that verse, a whole bunch of people in the church would fall over dead, claiming I'm not withholding a single mite of everything, but of course many are. But why don't people drop dead like that now? Why did these? And why did people like Saul of Tarsus, who's persecuting Christians actively, why didn't he drop dead? Why didn't God do that to people who would have been of greater benefit to the church, in a sense, to drop Ananias and, I mean not Ananias, but Annas and Caiaphas, the high priest, drop them dead.

But God didn't do it. So what's up here? Why is this happening? Well, we have to remember this is the very beginning of the church. And God, I believe, wants to set an example, as he did at the beginning of the Mosaic temple system, the tabernacle system.

On the very first day that the tabernacle opened for services, the first time, in Leviticus chapter 10, two of the four priests who were supposed to offer incense, Nadab and Abihu, they brought the wrong incense, or more correctly, they brought the right incense, but the wrong coals, the wrong fire. They burned incense with what the Bible calls strange fire. They're supposed to take fire from the altar fire, and they got their fire from somewhere else.

We don't know where else, but it wasn't from the right place. And fire from God came out of the tabernacle and killed them. And here, you've got three million people served by only four priests, and two of them died the first day.

That's going to put a heavy load on the remaining two. But God didn't apparently care about the inconvenience. He wanted to make a point, obviously.

And yet, how many far worse sins did priests commit later? After all, Caiaphas, who killed

Jesus, he was a priest. He was a chief priest. I think killing Jesus would be worse than offering the wrong coals of fire and burning incense, you'd think.

And there were other priests throughout Israel's history later on who did horrible things, immoral things, murderous things, traitorous things against God. And we don't read that Nadab and Abihu were particularly traitors against God. They just didn't follow the prescription for how to worship God.

And so what's interesting is these guys dropped dead for what looks like a relatively small infraction. Ananias and Sapphira, they dropped dead for what seems relatively a small infraction compared to some of the horrible sins that people have committed, even in the church since then, and who don't die for it. What's up with that? Well, it seems clear that God was instituting a new order when he opened the tabernacle.

And he's instituting a new order at Pentecost in the early church. And he says, I'm going to make an example of what I tolerate and what I don't tolerate. In the case of Nadab and Abihu, he said to Aaron after they were dead, his eye will be regarded as holy by those who come unto me.

In other words, you don't make this stuff up as you go along. I told you how to do it. If I'm not regarded as holy enough for you to want to obey me, well, I'm not happy.

And I just showed it by burning these two guys up. Now, I'm not going to burn up every priest that makes me unhappy. But you got this precedent here.

This is what I think about this kind of thing. Now, if the other priests seem to get away with more, no one's getting away with anything. I just didn't judge suddenly in that case.

But I haven't changed my opinion. You know, it says in Ecclesiastes chapter 8 in verse 11 or 12, it says, because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil. Because God doesn't immediately judge when people deserve to be judged.

They think they got away with it. Their hearts are fully set in them to continue doing evil because the execution of the sentence was not immediate. In this case, it was.

Now, there are worse sins than what Ananias and Sapphira did. I'm quite sure. But what they did was a bad thing.

The wages of sin is death. And everybody, frankly, is going to die. And that's God's priority to decide when.

If God says, okay, today's the day for your last breath, he doesn't have to give any reasons for it. If you say, why did this baby die so young? Why did my child die? Why did this person die in the middle of their life when they had so much potential? Well, that's

God's business. Everyone's going to die.

And whether they die in childhood or in middle age or at old age, it's not a happy thing for anybody. If you lose your spouse or your parents when they're in their 90s or even 100 years old, you're still not happy. Death is not a happy thing.

It doesn't matter when it happens. But the thing is, it's God's prerogative. He's the one who is there to execute the inevitable sentence of death.

And no one's going to live forever. Therefore, God has the right to choose what circumstances, what time each person is going to breathe their last in order to serve whatever purposes he has. And in this case, his purpose was to communicate to the church.

I don't want you people being hypocrites like the Pharisees. I don't want people pretending to be spiritual when they're not. This is how I feel about it.

If you kill him, you're dead. Now, I'm not going to boom you're dead to every hypocrite who comes along, but I still feel the same way as I did about it when I killed him. Just know that if you're doing what Ananias and Sapphira did, God feels about it the same way as he felt about them when he killed them.

This sentence just has not been executed speedily. But like it says in John chapter 3, in the last verse of those who don't believe in Christ, it says, the wrath of God abides upon them. It isn't revealed yet.

So they die, but it's a it's hanging over like a sort of Damocles by a thread. Everyone who's unrepentant and sinning is living under impending doom. And that that doom can come any moment.

That's God's product. He doesn't have to give reasons. He doesn't have to give a reason why this person died young.

This person died old. This person died on that day. Someone died another day.

Everyone's going to die. And that's God's business when they do. And in this case, he took them out, I think, to make a statement.

And it made a statement. Basically, fear came on all the church. And we read shortly afterwards that no one dared to join themselves to them anymore, which might suggest that Ananias and Sapphira might not have even really been Christians, because it's God who is continually adding to the church in the early chapters of Acts.

But some people may have joined themselves. That is, they joined the church because a crowd attracts a crowd. I know this is true in the Jesus movement and in every revival.

When there's a huge number of people getting excited about God, there's a lot of thrill, a lot of electricity there, you know. People who aren't getting saved, they're attracted to that. Some kind of a party over here.

These people are having fun. I think I'll join with them. And so a revival gets almost artificially inflated.

Once there's a real revival and it starts to grow and becomes a phenomenon, it gets inflated further by curiosity seekers, people who are just, you know, they want to get a piece of that. They're not really all in, in the sense that others are, but they kind of like the vibe. And so that might be the case with Ananias and Sapphira.

They might not have even been Christians. And we do read that the fear came on the whole church and came on even the people around in Jerusalem so that no one joined themselves to them anymore, but the church still grew. So God still added to the church.

But people who weren't being added by God stopped adding themselves. I think the church would be healthier at every age if people who weren't added by God just stayed away from the church. It's a much healthier situation when the church is really the church, when the people in church are really the body of Christ.

And when the church can be a fellowship of followers of Christ rather than a mixed bag of people with general religious emotions, you know, I mean, the church is supposed to be made up of people who are fully committed. And you can see how fully committed the early Christians were and how small a breach of that was made an example of here. It seems to me.

Now, I want to say this too. I said it's possible that Ananias and Sapphira were not really converted. It's possible they were.

I don't know if they were or not. One theory is they were not. One theory is they were.

We're not really told. But what if they were? Would God kill a Christian? Well, he might. Why not? I mean, Christians, again, are going to die like everyone else if it suits God's purpose to make an example of you because you're being a rebel or you're being, you know, you're strained.

He might even do it to avoid you going far enough to get outside the realm. You know, he might see that you're on a path that's going to lead to damnation. And, you know, he's going to stop you before you get there.

Some people think that's what happened. Could be. We're not.

It's interesting that Luke doesn't bother to speculate at all about whether Ananias and Sapphira were really Christians or not. If they were, I would believe they went to heaven

when they died. I believe that, you know, if they died even under the discipline of God, that doesn't mean they were damned.

It just means that God decided to make an example of them so other Christians wouldn't make the same mistakes. There's much we're not told. But it was mysterious enough to those who witnessed it that it gave them the creeps and great fear came upon them all.

And that's what we read about in verse 11. So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things. And through the hands of the apostles, verse 12, many signs and wonders were done among the people and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.

Nothing new here. We were told back in chapter 2 that many signs and wonders were done through the apostles. We have read all along that the church was all in one accord while they were waiting for the spirit to fall and when they lived as a community and when they prayed in chapter 4, they prayed in one accord.

In one accord is a common expression for their unity of purpose, for the unity of intention. They were focused. They were a focused community of people focused on one thing.

The kingdom of God. On the king Jesus and the spreading of his kingdom. And they didn't have a lot of, they weren't at cross purposes with each other.

They weren't a bunch of Christians that were kind of generally interested in Jesus but had a lot of other interests that were conflicting with each other. They were all, all in. They were all focused on the same intention.

And they were in Solomon's porch. That's not new either. Actually, it was in Solomon's porch of the temple that the sermon was given in Acts chapter 3. And it was Solomon's porch where Jesus walked in John chapter 10 and so forth.

This was apparently a common meeting place in the temple. I think the church had gotten so large that as we read, they broke bread from house to house and prayed in the temple. We have to assume that they had a combination of large meetings and small meetings in their week or even in their day.

They didn't do that every day. But their close fellowship, their table fellowship, their taking communion, their community life was mostly expressed in homes from house to house. But if it was only there, then you have the same phenomenon you have today where you have house churches.

Usually, and I actually, we have a house church in our home. And I've been in multiple house churches over the years. People who find the institutional church to be, you know, lacking, sufficiently lacking that they can't see any reason to go there anymore.

But they still want a fellowship. They still want a church. And they want church.

They just don't want what the institutional church is offering up. They often will meet in homes. But the most common phenomenon when people do that is that they become insular.

You know, they get 12 to 20 people who see each other regularly. And that's the whole body of Christ that they're really interacting with. Now, it's a wonderful thing, frankly, to be regularly interacting with 12 to 20 people in a home, eating meals, worshipping, studying.

And that's what a home church usually is characterized by. But after a while, 12 to 20 people seems like a pretty small community. You don't get the sense that you're part of this global phenomenon of the kingdom of God.

In fact, house churches very rarely have any evangelistic work going on. Some do. They're usually just kind of insular.

And most of them don't send out missionaries, though some of them might. The idea is house churches are good for what they're good for. But they're not all that's needed.

There needs to be a sense that I'm part of this bigger global body, or at least the large entity of the local body in my town. And so what the early church apparently did is they had this home church thing going on with breaking bread and stuff from house to house. So they had the advantage of that, but they also would meet all of them in the temple.

Because that was probably the only building big enough to house over 10,000 people in a given meeting who had a house that big. And so having both of these things going on, it's a lot of muscles to teach the entire body of Christ in these large meetings so that everyone's getting similarly trained. But then the life of their community was lived out in smaller groups.

I think that many churches have attempted to incorporate both of those things. They have the big churches and the small groups. Most churches that do so find that a lot more people attend the big service than will get involved in small groups.

And maybe that can't be avoided. But I think one of the issues may be that in our culture, we think of the big group as the church and the small group as optional. Small, midweek Bible study, prayer meetings, whatever.

Those are optional. There's never been a church I knew of until the revival came in the 70s that had as many people on the Wednesday night prayer meeting as they had on Sunday morning. Because Sunday morning, people just think that's church.

And if the church has to have 3,000 people or 10,000 people like some megachurches

have, that's church. I go to church. I don't know anyone there.

I sit in theater seating and listen to someone give a performance up there. And that's church. I've done my church.

I go home and next week I'll go to church again. And in order to try to add some dynamic life, churches have to say, let's break up into small groups. But not everyone's interested in small groups.

Because first of all, they don't know anyone. They go to a big church where they don't know anyone and they're not really drawn to these small groups. And I think the problem is that the big church is called the church and the small groups are called small groups.

Whereas I think in the early church, the community life was the church. The big meetings were simply times when the whole community got together to learn things together. So, I mean, the small group was the church life.

That's where the bread was broken. That's where communion was taken. That's where interaction, that's where sharing of goods with the poor was taking place to a large degree.

And so they had both of these features, but I suspect that the temple meetings were considered to be almost the second tier of church life. The first tier being in community with people in homes, people you know, people you eat with, people you interact with, people whose needs are known to you and their concerns are on your heart. That's church life.

And then, oh yeah, tonight Peter's speaking at the temple. Let's all go up here and say because we want to all be fed and taught together by the apostolic teaching. It's hard for modern churches to get that going.

I've seen some places where it worked out pretty well, but it's pretty unusual because, again, we still think of the big group as the church where there's no real community activity going on, just theater seating and watching and somewhat participating a little bit by singing and so forth. Okay, so they had this going on. Solomon's porch is where the big meetings were held.

Verse 13, none of the rest dared to join them. That's what I was mentioning earlier, but the people esteemed them highly. Again, this as in chapter 2 in verse 47, since they had favor of all the people.

Here we read, the people esteem them highly. It was this general popularity of the church in the city of Jerusalem among common people that gave the apostles such power in preaching because they had a platform to preach from of a community that was visibly a phenomenon that people thought was a good thing. And if people today, if

unbelievers today thought of the church today as a good thing, then evangelism would be easier.

Most people today don't think of the church as a good thing. They think of it as, well, they don't see a big difference. Between the people who go to church on Sunday and the same people working with them in the office during the week.

They don't see a transformed life. They don't see a different species of human being. They just see someone who's more or less pursuing the same goals in life, enjoying the same jokes, having the same values as they have, except the exception is they go to church on Sunday.

And when people see that, they don't see anything impressive about Christianity. What they see is a bunch of people who live an awful lot like they do, except those people are a little more judgmental than we are. You know? Yeah, the distinction between Christians and non-Christians in many cases is perceived to be only that the Christians are more judgmental people and therefore less attractive people.

Less loving, it's perceived. Anyway, I'm not saying that's a fair perception, but that's what I think most non-Christians think they see. In the early church, they saw the church as a community of people who were very different.

Like a different species of human being. Certainly a different species of human community. Now, the believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, verse 14 says.

So multitudes were increasingly added. That means the degree and the rate of increase was, of adding was increasing. It wasn't slowing down.

Like I said, a crowd draws a crowd, and a bigger crowd draws even more of a crowd. So as the thing grew exponentially, it became a huge movement. I mean, there must have been eventually hundreds of thousands of Christians in the city of Jerusalem.

And this was, at this point, the only church, the whole church in the world, was the Jerusalem church. With the exception of some unrecognized or unofficial maybe fellowship groups that might have started in different places where pilgrims from Jerusalem who had been there on the day of Pentecost, they may have gone back home and witnessed to a few friends. They might have had a few, some small fellowships going on, but they weren't recognized by the apostles.

They weren't even known about by the apostles. But the church was counted to be there in Jerusalem at that point in time. That changed eventually, but it was a big swelling movement in one place.

It says, so that the believers were increasing. Lots of people, in verse 15, says, so that

they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also, a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem.

So not just the city, but the suburbs heard about them and began to bring their sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits. And they were all healed. Apparently, when Peter's shadow would fall on them, Peter didn't have enough time to lay his hands on every sick person.

Apparently, all the apostles didn't. There's a lot of apostles, but there's a lot more sick. And so people just lined the streets as Peter walked by.

They expected his shadow passing would heal them, and apparently it worked. Sort of like when Paul was in Ephesus and handkerchiefs and aprons were taken from him to people who were sick and they got healed. And demons came out of people, as in this case demons were exorcised by the shadow of Peter.

These things don't happen very often. When God does that kind of special thing, and by the way, when that happened with Paul in Ephesus in Acts 19 11, it specifically says special miracles were done by Paul in that town in this respect, that things were taken from him. It was a special case.

It wasn't what happened all the time. Peter didn't all his life long heal people just by walking by and having his shadow. But there were times when God, in order to put his endorsement to the messenger who brings it, would connect it with remarkable supernatural things.

Remember the last verse of the gospel of Mark says that the apostles, whenever preaching the gospel, the Lord working with them, confirming the word with signs following. The purpose of the miracles was not just because people like to see supernatural things happen, or not even because sick people are happier to be healthy. But it was confirming the word.

It wasn't simply God's finds it intolerable for people to be sick and therefore has to heal them. He does not find it intolerable for people to be sick. Many people who are godly people and happy Christians are sick or disabled.

God apparently doesn't find that intolerable. In fact, in some cases, their very sickness gives them a witness that they wouldn't otherwise have. Think of Johnny Erickson Tata.

Who would have hurt her if she didn't break her neck? God sometimes finds it convenient for people, his people, to have sickness. Paul had a thorn in the flesh. And he was told when he prayed that God would take it away.

The Lord said, my grace is sufficient for you. My strength is made perfect in your

weakness. For me to be sick might be to God's advantage.

And if it is, then let it be. Paul says, therefore, I'll rejoice in my infirmities. For when I'm weak, I'm strong.

It is not the case that healings take place in the Bible because God cannot tolerate sickness. God can tolerate and even use sickness. They take place because it is a sign that the messenger that is bringing about the healing, Paul or Peter or someone else, the apostles, that that is God's endorsement of them.

That is God's proof that these guys have a supernatural element to their preaching. And they're not they're really from God. They're not just making this up.

That's one reason why the apostles came to believe Saul of Tarsus was really saved. In Acts 9, it says when he first got saved and came back to Jerusalem, the apostles were afraid of him. They thought he wasn't really saved.

But it was to a very large extent the signs and wonders that God did through him that were the signs of an apostle. He said in 2nd Corinthians 12, 12. These are the signs of an apostle.

And therefore, they realized he's not making this up. People who are making up a fake conversion can't just raise the dead just because they want to fool you. You know.

So. So God is doing these supernatural things. The shadow of Peter.

Because it connects with Peter and his message. God honors it and causes people to be healed and even demons to be delivered from demons. OK.

Now. Verse 17. Then the high priest rose up and those who were with him, which is the sect of the Sadducees, remember, the haters of the resurrection.

And they were filled with indignation and laid their hands on the apostles. Remember, they had already told the apostles, don't preach anymore. And the apostles just didn't stop.

They didn't cease. And so they're in violation of at least the orders that were given, although not of any law that was on the books. And they put them in a common prison, apparently planning to take them to court the next morning.

However, something happened. An angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out and said, Go stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life. And when they heard that, they entered the temple early in the morning and taught.

But the high priest and those with him came and called the council together, not

knowing the apostles who escaped, with all the elders of the children of Israel and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported saying, Indeed, we found the prison shut securely and the guards standing outside before the doors. But when we opened them, we found no one inside.

Even the guards didn't know the prisoners escaped. They're standing by the doors and the prisoners are gone. Now, when the high priest, the captain of the temple and the chief priest heard these things, they wondered what the outcome would be.

What? What's going on here? Then one came and told them, saying, Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple teaching the people. Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people lest they should be stoned. The people loved the apostles so much that they might have, at least the Sanhedrin feared, that they might have stoned the Sanhedrin or the messengers that came to arrest them.

But the apostles went. They were taken without violence. Suppose they had said, No, I don't think I'll go with you.

Sorry. This crowd here is standing with me. They're saying I'm not going to.

You know. But instead, they just meekly said, Okay. You want to take us back before court? We'll be glad to preach to you again.

We kind of like preaching to that audience. Okay. Take us in.

So they took them without violence. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. That is the Sanhedrin.

And the high priest asked him, saying, Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine and intend to bring this man's blood on us. Yeah. Remember, it was Matthew 27, 25, when Pilate said, You know, I wash my hands of the blood of this man.

And they said, His blood be on us and our children. They asked for his blood guilt to be on them. And now he says, How come you're trying to put his blood guilt on us? Well, it wasn't me that did that.

And Peter said, Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. Which is putting a little more bluntly. Last time he said, Now, whether we should obey you or God, you'd be the judge of that.

But we're going to do what we're going to do. That's what he said in chapter four. Now he just says it plainly.

You apparently didn't figure it out. We're supposed to obey God, not you. I let you judge that last time, but you didn't make the right judgment.

So I'm just going to spell it out for you. We ought to obey God. Rather than men.

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you murdered. Now here they just said, We're angry at you because you're putting his blood on us. Peter didn't back down.

He said, Yeah, you murdered him. I guess that would put his blood on you, wouldn't it? God, our father, raised up Jesus, whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God exalted to his right hand to be prince and savior.

That is ruler and savior. And to give repentance to Israel and the forgiveness of sins. Now, giving repentance is something the Bible sometimes speaks of God doing.

There's a certain Calvinistic trend to say that this means that God just unilaterally gives repentance to people whom he has elected. But I don't think these verses necessarily support that concept. I think that God has given Israel.

They didn't all repent. So this gift is not unilateral. You have to kind of accept a gift.

God has given repentance. He's offered to you the privilege of repenting. How? By letting you hear the gospel.

By convicting you as your hearts are perked by the spirit. God is giving you this repentance if you'll take it. But you don't want it.

They didn't take it. He gave repentance to Israel but many in Israel didn't accept it. So the giving of it is not unilateral or without agreement on the part of the recipient any more than any gift is.

If someone gives me if you come up and say I want to give you a gift I want to give you my yacht. I say I don't have any use for a yacht, thanks. You can give it to someone else.

Maybe you should sell it and give it to the poor. No, I just want to give you this yacht. Well, thank you, but that's very generous but I don't want a yacht.

But I want to give it to you. It's a gift. Well, it may be a gift but it's a gift I'm not taking, thanks.

If someone has a gift for me that's nice but I have the option of accepting or rejecting. If they say I don't care what you want I'm going to give it to you anyway. Well, that's not a gift that's an imposition.

You're forcing something on me. That's not a gift. God gives repentance.

God gives faith the Bible says but it has to be accepted before people have it. And it's

not a unilateral thing that just got elected certain people and he just made them repent made them believe that there is this. There are people who believe that but that's it's not these passages that they use don't necessarily stand strongly on their side in the matter, I think.

So he says in verse 32 and we are his witnesses to these things and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him. Notice he gives those to those who obey him. This does not mean that you obey God a certain amount then you've earned the Holy Spirit so he gives you the Holy Spirit.

The gift of the Holy Spirit is a gift also, it's free. But those to whom it has been given are the people who obey him. That is God gives the Holy Spirit to those who have surrendered to the Lordship of Christ and have become his followers his obedient ones.

God gives those are the people he's given his spirit to. And the Holy Spirit bears witness to the resurrection of Christ too. He says we do, we bear witnesses but so does the Holy Spirit.

It's a way of saying you don't have to believe me believe the Holy Spirit he's bearing witness to you right now too. I remember witnessing with somebody in a park back in the 70's and I was just listening while a friend of mine was witnessing to another person. I heard him say to the unbeliever he said and you know I'm telling you the truth because the Holy Spirit is bearing witness to it too.

To your heart. The guy didn't say no he isn't. You know I mean I thought well that's interesting I'd never had thought of that.

You know and you might not think I'm credible but the Holy Spirit bears witness too. And that's who you're dealing with here. The Holy Spirit.

And he's the one who's witness you're rejecting. Now I realize it's getting late but I'm going to dash through these last verses. When they heard this they were furious and took counsel to kill them.

Then one of the counsels stood up a teacher of the law held in respect by all people and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while. And he said to them men of Israel. Now by the way this is Gamaliel I didn't mention Gamaliel is mentioned by name.

He is by the way a known character from outside the Bible. The Talmud knows of Gamaliel too. And so once again Luke is dealing with known people from history here.

He was actually a student or the son I think of the Rabbi Hillel. And he was Saul of Tarsus his mentor. Saul had come from Tarsus to Jerusalem to study under Gamaliel.

So Saul might have even been in the room when this happened. We don't read of it yet. We read of him a little later in chapter 7. But interestingly Saul may have been overhearing this and his mentor speaks up.

Now his mentor by the way Gamaliel was much more lenient than Saul was. Saul was fiercely opposed to the gospel. Gamaliel cooler heads prevailed on this occasion because Gamaliel a very famous Jewish teacher a Pharisee by the way not a Sadducee.

He he spoke sensibly and moderately and cooled the heads of the hotheads who wanted to kill the apostles. He said to them men of Israel take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. Don't kill these people.

Wait a minute before you do that think about this. Think first. For some time ago Thutis rose up claiming to be somebody.

A number of men about 400 joined him. He was slain and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. After this man Judas of Galilee arose up in the days of the census and drew away many people after him.

He also perished and all who obeyed him were dispersed. Now he's referring to two previous movements before Jesus movement. Thutis is unknown to us from any other sources but Judas is known historically as the man who started the zealot party in the year 6 AD.

Judas of Galilee he's called. So we know about this man. We don't know about the Thutis he talks about.

And he says he points out both of these men made a splash. They all had their followers but you know what they were killed their followers were scattered nothing came up. Where are they now? They're gone.

There was nothing to get upset about. Just wait long enough and these guys fizzle out. And now I say to you keep away from these men and let them alone for if this plan or this work is of men it will come to nothing.

But if it is of God you cannot overthrow it lest you even be found to fight against God. And they agreed with him. Now he's basically saying let's let this let's see what happens here.

I think Gamaliel was maybe a little bit thinking you know we might in fact be fighting against God. He actually raises that possibility. We don't know that we aren't.

We don't know if this is of men or of God and if we make the wrong decision we may find we are fighting against God. So Gamaliel was not far from the kingdom here. That he ever became a Christian is not recorded.

But but he was very wise. Now by the way his counsel is not necessarily inspired. It is you cannot count on the idea that a man-made movement will fizzle out quickly.

Mormonism hasn't. Jehovah's Witnesses haven't. Those are man-made religious systems that have gathered a lot of followers and they've been around for over 100 years.

Close to 200 years. And so they don't always fizzle out quickly. Gamaliel is not speaking prophetically.

It is his opinion that if it's not of God it'll fizzle out soon enough. Otherwise if it is of God then we really want to be on the right side of this thing. So let's just remain neutral at the moment.

So they agreed with him. However even though they agreed with him they called the apostles and they beat them. They gave them a beating just because they were so frustrated.

They couldn't really find them guilty of anything but I just go and take out my anger at you so I'm going to beat you. And they were beat probably pretty severely and it says when they had beaten them they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus which is the same command they gave them at the end of the first trial. That didn't do much good.

And let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer. Shame for his name.

And daily in the temple and every house notice they were meeting in the temple and in houses they did not cease which is the thing they were told they were told to cease and these two statements are in juxtaposition don't do this anymore. But they didn't cease. They kept doing the same thing teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

Now the only thing I need to comment on though we've come to the end of our session is that their attitude toward their suffering is tremendous but not unique. They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ. There have been many Christian prisoners and martyrs throughout history who have rejoiced to suffer for Christ.

That doesn't mean they enjoyed their suffering no one enjoys suffering. But they counted a privilege. I would count it a privilege to give my life to save my children or my wife for somebody important to me.

If someone you love you don't really want to die you'd prefer not to but if it came to that you'd be honored. Honored to give my life to someone I love. If I loved Jesus that way I'd be honored to suffer for him.

And in fact who's counting them worthy? Is it God that's counting them worthy to suffer? Perhaps. Or is it the Sanhedrin that's counting them worthy to suffer? The same Sanhedrin that beat Jesus now beats them. Well thank you.

Coming from you that's a compliment. I mean that you who hate Jesus you hate me too? I'm glad you see the closeness. I'm glad you associate the two.

I'm glad you see the similarity. I'm honored. I'm honored that you who hate Jesus think I'm enough like him that you have to hate me too.

That's great. And they rejoiced in it and it didn't stop them at all. They were they had scars on their backs from that day on but they still preached the same as before.

And that ends this section of chapters 3 through 4 that was like I said one flowing account. Chapter 6 there's a break in the account. We don't know the chronology.

We don't know the timing or whatever. Another story begins in chapter 6 which ends up with the martyrdom of Stephen and the spreading of the gospel outside Jerusalem in a significant way for the first time. So we'll take a break and come back to that.