**Introduction – Acts 4:32–6:7**

* **General Overview:** This section of Acts highlights how God’s grace overcame three threats to the early church. Those threats are (1) internal corruption (4:32–5:11), (2) external persecution (5:12–42), and (3) internal strife (6:1–7).[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Day 1 – The Threat of Internal Corruption (4:32–5:11) – Part 1**

* **Overview:** The first section (Acts 4:32–5:11) describes how God’s grace overcame the threat of internal corruption. The section deals with the topic of charitable giving and illustrates how Satan seeks to poison it with selfishness. Luke begins with a general description of how the church was flourishing in its giving (4:32–35). He then holds up Barnabas as an example of sincere generosity (4:36–37) and contrasts him with Ananias and Saphira—examples of sinful generosity (5:1–11). In the end, readers witness how God graciously purges His people of their wickedness and elevates everyone to a state of greater reverence for Him.
* **Textual Key:** It’s important to note every time Luke mentions something “at the apostle’s feet” (4:35, 37; 5:2; 10). The phrase occurs repeatedly, and signifies submission (Luke 7:38; 8:35, 41; 20:43). He uses the concept as a structuring device to organize his thoughts and demonstrate why genuine submission to God matters in the church:
  + Luke first commends believers for laying their gifts “at the apostles’ feet” (4:35)
  + He then commends Barnabas for doing the same (4:37)
  + He then introduces Ananias and Saphira as *apparently* doing the same (5:2). But Peter quickly confronts them both for being disingenuous before God.
  + Finally, Luke notes how both Ananias and Saphira fell dead for their sins—and he specifically mentions how Saphira fell dead “at [Peter’s] feet” (5:10). In this way, the story ends with an ironic twist that shows why submission matters: God is not mocked.

**4:32–35 – Unity from the Word**

* **V. 32 –** Luke starts this new section off with an overview of the church’s health. In the broader context, he’s identifying the standard that Satan comes to corrupt.
  + Luke gives verse 32 as the “theme verse” that is then supported and explained in vv. 33–35. The main emphasis here falls on the church’s *unity*.
  + Luke says, “the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul.” It’s important to imprint on the word “heart” for two reasons: First, Luke shows how these believers were united at the deepest level of their thought and being (“heart and soul”).[[2]](#footnote-2) Second, Luke eventually returns to the theme of the heart to demonstrate how this unity was corrupted when Ananias’ “heart” became divided by Satan’s influence (5:3–4). At this point, though, everyone’s faithful and doing fine.
  + Luke describes the fruit of this unity with the next phrase: “and not one was saying that any of his possessions was his own, but, for them, everything was common.” Luke’s language describes how the *entire* congregation was sincerely open-handed with their resources. There was “not one” exception to this. Just like how the members of the human body serve each other, so were these believers realizing that their resources were designed to benefit the body. How they got here is explained in vv. 33–35.
* **V. 33 –** This verse begins to explain how the congregation came to be so openhanded. As Martin Luther once described the Protestant Reformation saying, “I did nothing. The word did everything,” Luke’s point here is similar. He says, “And with great power the apostles were bearing witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.” He then uses a unique word for “and,” to show how this witness brought “great grace…upon them all.” Verses 34–35 go on to further define that grace as the open-handed generosity of the church.
  + The word “witnessing” ties back to the apostles’ original mission (1:8) and refers to the advance of the word (2:40). The mention “great power” and the focus on “the resurrection of the Lord Jesus” further indicates that the power behind their witness is the power of the risen Lord (3:12–16; cf. Eph 1:15–2:10).
  + The phrase “and great grace was upon them all” is perhaps the most important phrase in the verse because it introduces the effect of the apostolic witness. The point is that the word brought the church to enjoy “great grace.” Luke uses a unique word for “and” (Gk. *te*) that forms a stronger-than-usual connection between the “witnessing” of the apostles and the “grace” that everyone enjoyed. On top of that, readers can see verbal parallels in how “great power” led to “great grace” being upon the people.
* **Vv. 34–35 –** Luke writes vv. 34–35 to explain what this “great grace” looked like.
  + The sign of “great grace” was that “there was not a needy person among them.” This phrase recalls an economic ideal for God’s people given in Deuteronomy (Deut 15:7). And this caliber of generosity is also, as Paul says in 2 Corinthians, a sign that a church is obedient to the gospel (2 Cor 9:13; cf. 1 John 3:16–17). Again, the word is doing this.
  + Drilling into this more, Luke explains the practical dynamics, saying: “for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales, and lay them at the apostles’ feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need.” Here, Luke tells us that the wealthier believers in Jerusalem would even go so far as to liquidate their properties so that their brothers and sisters wouldn’t have to go without. (Regarding whether the early Christians had a socialist ethic, see Commentary on 2:1–47). God’s grace prompted them to open their wallets and serve other believers in need.[[3]](#footnote-3)
    - Keeping with the biblical imagery, it’s important to see a need in the church like a cut in the body. When the body is wounded, the “lifeblood” of resources should flow to the wound (cf. 1 John 3:17 where “goods” is translated from Gk. “life/livelihood”). This was happening in Acts, and so we can see the church body was healthy.
  + The fact that these believers laid “them [i.e. the proceeds] at the apostles’ feet” demonstrates that the early church is voluntarily submitting their goods to the wisdom of the apostles for distribution, and again, such distribution was needs-based. As mentioned above, this phrase “at the apostles’ feet” serves as a key theme for the rest of the section.

**4:36–37 – Barnabas: An Example of Sincere Generosity**

* **Vv. 36–37 –** Luke takes two verses to introduce Joseph-Barnabas. This man becomes a key player in Acts (cf. 9:27; 11:22; 13:1; etc.)—and Luke often gives his characters subtle introductions (like Paul’s in Acts 7:58)—but here, Luke’s focus is on Barnabas as a “sterling example”[[4]](#footnote-4) of sincere Christian giving. While the introduction is short, it’s dense, and every detail helps to emphasize the godliness of this man:
  + **His name:** First, Luke calls him “Joseph…who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means Son of Encouragement).” The key point is that Joseph earned an affirming “nickname” from the apostles—a major proof of his character. Barnabas is a man so transformed by the gospel that it warranted a brand new name.[[5]](#footnote-5) This can be seen in how his name calls him the “son” or “one begotten” of encouragement (the word for exhortation; 2:40).[[6]](#footnote-6) The focus is on how the *word of God* made him who he is. So while Barnabas givesencouragement to others in Acts, that’s not what his name means.
  + **His heritage:** Second,Barnabas is introduced as “a Levite of Cyprian birth.” The fact that Luke specifies his Levitical heritage is significant because, literarily, Barnabas contrasts the only other “Levite” in Luke’s writings—the one in the parable of the good Samaritan who *ignored* the needy (Luke 10:32).[[7]](#footnote-7)  Here, Theophilus reads about a Levite doing the exact opposite. And the note about his “Cyprian birth” could explain (1) how he owned a field and (2) where it was, since Levites couldn’t own land in Israel (cf. Numb 18:20, 24).[[8]](#footnote-8)
  + **His deed:** Third, Luke says that he “owned a field, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet.” This proves that Barnabas is truly submitted to Christ and devoted to his people, but the mention of a “field” also contrasts him with Ananias. Ananias also sells land, and as will be shown, Luke describes Ananias in many was like he describes Judas (see comment on 5:3–4; cf. Luke 22:3; Acts 1:18). So Garland notes, “The field that Barnabas sells recalls the field that Judas bought with the blood money for betraying Jesus (1:18). Barnabas is the antithesis of Judas as one who sacrificially gives up property to serve others. Ananias is Judas’s spiritual match as an example of selfishness.”[[9]](#footnote-9)

**Day 1 – Questions**

1. How can a church’s giving ministry be abused? How does the gospel safeguard sincere, open-handed, happy-hearted giving (cf. 2 Cor 8–9; 1 John 3:16–17)?
2. Why does God want us to be “of one heart and soul” with the rest of our church body (cf. John 17:17–23; Eph 4:11–16)?
3. Is there anything you own that you’re not open-handed with, should others have need?

**Day 2 – The Threat of Internal Corruption (4:32–5:11) – Part 2**

* As has been said, “The passage falls into two natural divisions: the confrontation of Ananias (vv. 1–6) and the strikingly parallel confrontation with Sapphira (vv. 7–11).”[[10]](#footnote-10)
* The parallels could be outlined as follows:
  + **Ananias**: Corruption (1–2) 🡪 Confrontation (3–4) 🡪 Conclusion (5–6)
  + **Saphira**: Corruption (7–8) 🡪 Confrontation (9) 🡪 Conclusion (10–11)

**5:1–11 – Ananias and Saphira: Examples of Sinful Generosity**

5:1–2 – Corruption

* **Vv. 1–2 –** Like with Barnabas, Luke takes two verses to introduce Ananias. Like Barnabas, Ananias sold a piece of property and laid its proceeds at the apostles’ feet. But here, Luke includes some glaring differences:
  + **His name:** First,Luke names Ananias, and scholars have detected irony in Ananias’s name—which means “Yahweh is gracious.”[[11]](#footnote-11)From Peter’s use of Ananias’ name in verse 3, it seems like the irony he intends is in the *contrast* between Yahweh’s graciousness and Ananias’s stinginess. Ananias doesn’t embody his name.
  + **His wife:** Some have suggested the inclusion of a husband-and-wife duo could parallel Adam and Eve,[[12]](#footnote-12) but it is far clearer that, like with Ananias, Luke is naming Sapphira because her name completes the picture he is painting. Her name refers to an *apparent* beauty that she has in the eyes of others (HALOT, 2001).[[13]](#footnote-13) In the context, it becomes clear that Sapphira (like Ananias) is not as great as she first appears. Instead, she’s hypocritical and deceptive. After all, Luke says right at the beginning that she has “full knowledge” of what her husband does.
  + **His deed:** The main contrast to Barnabas is the fact that Ananias “kept back some of the price for himself.” Polhill notes, “Significantly, the same rare verb occurs in the Greek version of Josh 7:1–26, the story of Achan,”[[14]](#footnote-14) referring to when Achan sinfully “kept back” some of Jericho’s riches for himself. This story is quite different, though,[[15]](#footnote-15) since there is no divine mandate for Ananias to surrender his stuff. Rather, the giving of the early church was entirely voluntary. In this context, the significance of the verb is that it contrasts the selflessness of the congregation mentioned in 4:32, in which “not one was saying that any of his possessions was his own.” Somewhere after v. 32, readers can see that something’s gone wrong.

5:3–4 – Confrontation

* **Vv. 3–4 –** Without intermission, Peter steps in to confront Ananias for fudging his testimony and claiming “this is all I got” when it wasn’t.
  + Peter was perhaps exercising the gift of knowledge (1 Cor 12:8), since he somehow knew the truth behind the façade. This is not unlike how “the Spirit inspired Elisha to see his servant Gehazi’s duplicity in accepting money from Naaman the leper (2 Kgs 5:26).”[[16]](#footnote-16)
  + Peter recognizes the spiritual forces behind the scenes when his spiritual radar pings this as a satanic attempt to dishonor the Holy Spirit. He also sees the way Satan effected this was by cultivating selfishness in Ananias’s heart so that he would “keep back some of the price of the land.” Ananias is merely the pawn in a supernatural glory war between God and Satan, but of course he’s still responsible for his sins.
  + The mention of how Satan “filled” his “heart to lie” and “keep back some of the price of the land” has rightly been tied to the earlier account of Judas.
  + Polhill writes, “Satan “filled” Ananias’s heart just as he had Judas’s (cf. Luke 22:3). Like Judas, Ananias was motived by money (cf. Luke 22:5). But in filling the heart of one of its members, Satan had now entered for the first time into the young Christian community as well.”[[17]](#footnote-17)
  + This raises the question of whether or not Ananias was truly saved. Looking only at what Luke *does* say, the answer is yes. Note how Luke said there was “not one” selfish person earlier in the church (4:32). Plus, the entire congregation (including Ananias and Sapphira) is described as “those who believed” (4:32). This is Luke’s way of describing true Christians. Later in Acts, Luke records another believer doing stupidly wicked things. Simon also “believed” and soon gets forcibly rebuked by Peter for his wickedness (8:13–23). Similarly, Paul writes of similar “discipline by death” for *Christians* who profane the Lord’s table in 1 Corinthians 11:27–32. So “discipline by death” is not a foreign reality to genuine Christians.
  + So then, can a Christian have Satan “fill his heart”? The answer is yes—if one lets him. This becomes clear when we understand that “filling” refers to the guiding influence of someone’s thoughts in a specific moment (cf. Eph 5:18). This is not referring to whether or not the Holy Spirit had permanently indwelt him. In a similar way to how one can walk according to the flesh or according to the Spirit, Ananias was *submitting* to the lies of Satan and *believing* that selfishness would give him a better future. This is clear from when Peter repeats the phrase later, asking, “Why is it that ***you*** [Ananias] laid this deed in your heart?” Satan tempted. Ananias obliged. The tie to Judas, therefore, does not mean Ananias was not saved. But it shows Theophilus that, in the narrative of history, Satan is still on the attack against the covenant people of Christ.[[18]](#footnote-18)
* From Luke’s vantage point, readers should not miss how the congregation that once had purity and simplicity of “heart” (4:32) has now had one congregant fall prey to the demonic assault directed at his “heart” (5:3). This battle was lost when Ananias stopped believing the truth and surrendered the high ground of his heart to Satan’s lies. He stopped submitting to God.
* Peter’s questions in verse 4 serve to highlight how Ananias is the culpable one here. For example, he asks, “While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your authority?” Clearly Peter is saying that Ananias was not forced into this. Rather he devised this idea in his “heart.”
  + Some translations say that he “conceived” this deed in his heart, but the literal word is “laid.” This translation is critical to help readers see Luke’s purpose because it is the same word used for when others—including Ananias—“laid [something] at the apostles’ feet” (4:35, 37, 5:2). But before Ananias “laid” the money at Peter’s feet, he first “laid” this sin in his heart. Hence, he was not fully submitted to the Lord in his heart, and so his outward “submission” was evil.
* Peter notes the heart issue by saying, “You have not lied to men but to God.” In other words, this charade that he pulled on those around him actually reflected a deeper deception at work towards God in heaven.

5:5–6 – Conclusion

* **Vv. 5–6** – The story moves quickly here. Once Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. From this, a great fear came over all who heard.
  + Importantly, “The verb translated **breathed his last** is used only in the context where someone is struck down by divine judgment (cf. Ac 5:5, 10; see 12:23 where God struck down Herod because he accepted worship as a god).”[[19]](#footnote-19)
  + He also “fell down” as Sapphira will do in verse 10.
  + The main result is one of fear over anyone who heard the news (believers or not; cf. v. 13). This reflects how people have come to see God at work among them and how He is not mocked by the sins of His people.
  + The mention of “young men” who “rose up and wrapped him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him,” probably indicates these men were more fit for manual labor (the translation is literally “younger men”),[[20]](#footnote-20) and the step-by-step account probably reflects burial custom (cf. John 19:40).

5:7–8 – Corruption

* The account of Sapphira closely resembles that of Ananias in its form—showing the pervasiveness of this corruption and the need for God to purge it from the congregation.
* **V. 7 –** Luke sets the scene with a 3-hour time gap to account for the burial of Ananias, during which Sapphira was elsewhere. Some have suggested that because she was wealthy, she may have had her own matters to attend to,[[21]](#footnote-21) but “Luke was not interested in such details. His only goal was to point to the grim outcome of her duplicity with her husband. She joined him in the conspiracy with the funds. She would join him in death.”[[22]](#footnote-22)
* **V. 8 –** Peter gives her a chance to deny what Ananias said. “This much” refers to the price Ananias gave to Peter, and he wants to know if that was indeed everything like they said. Her corruption is seen when she agrees, “Yes, that much.” Hence, “She misses the opportunity to change their story and tell the truth. Her answer implicates her in the deception.”[[23]](#footnote-23)

5:9 – Confrontation

* **V. 9 –** Knowing she’s lying, Peter asks her the haunting question, “Why?” and exposes her secret before her eyes. His language of putting “the Spirit of the Lord to the test” suggests a taunt toward God. It recalls the Israelite’s testing of God in the wilderness and showed how “They believed that they could behave in a manner clearly not sanctioned by God and get away with it.”[[24]](#footnote-24) Peter then calls attention to the younger men and reveals that she will join her husband in the grave. God is not mocked (Gal 6:7).

5:10–11 – Conclusion

* **V. 10 –** In similar fashion to her husband, Sapphira “fell…and breathed her last,” but here the ironic twist is that she fell “at [Peter’s] feet.” Peterson notes how she and her husband once were dishonest but now have been made to “express submission to [Peter’s] leadership in dying.”[[25]](#footnote-25) At the end of the day, submission matters because God’s glory matters. Sapphira’s gravesite next to her husband testifies to that fact.
* **V. 11 –** Like with the death of Ananias, “great fear came over” people, but the unique point here is that it came over “the whole church, and over all who heard these things [outside of the church].” This is the first use of “church” in Acts and helps to constitute them as the people of God. Beyond this, the report of this death sent shockwaves across the newsfeeds of the day, reaching to people outside the church (cf. v. 12).
* Polhill says, “Perhaps it is not by accident that [the word “church”] occurs in the context of this story. The church can only thrive as the people of God if it lives within the total trust of all its members. Where there is that unity of trust, that oneness of heart and mind, the church flourishes in the power of the Spirit. Where there is duplicity and distrust, its witness fails.”[[26]](#footnote-26)

**Day 2 – Questions**

1. What evidence do we have that Ananias & Saphira were true believers?
2. Why do you think Satan tries so hard to tempt believers to be selfish like Ananias?
3. Explain what Ananias should have done differently in his thoughts and actions to avoid the sin he committed.

**Day 3 – The Threat of External Persecution (5:12–42) – Part 1**

* **Overview:** The second section (Acts 5:12–42) describes how God’s grace overcomes the threat of external persecution. Like before, Luke begins this section with a general description of how the church was flourishing (5:12–16). He then describes how the high priest and Sadducees came after the apostles and proceeded to lay hands on them. Nevertheless, the hand of God worked to free His apostles with a miracle (5:17–26). When the apostles are rounded back up and put on trial, they stand tall and proclaim the gospel (5:27–32), and despite the anger of their enemies (5:33), God even uses one of the Sanhedrin to get the leaders to leave the apostles alone (5:34–40). In the end, the apostles are released and resume the proclamation of the gospel with joy (5:41–42). In this way, God’s grace enabled them to overcome the threat of external persecution.
* **Textual Key:** While the last section highlighted the language of “feet,” this section highlights the language of “hands” (5:12, 18, 30). The language of one’s “hand” in the Bible refers to one’s power (cf. Deut 8:17; Lam 1:14; John 3:35), and Luke uses this concept to communicate the power struggle between the apostles and their opponents. For example:
  + Luke describes miracles occurring “at the hands of the apostles” (5:12)
  + The Jewish leaders then get jealous and lay “hands” upon the apostles, jailing them (5:18)
  + Peter then testifies of how futile it was for these Jewish leaders to (lit.) “lay violent hands” upon Jesus, since God raised Him from the dead (5:30). This implies it is similarly futile to lay hands upon His apostles.
  + And while the leaders then seek to kill the apostles just like they killed Jesus (5:33), Gamaliel urges them to “let them alone,” lest they be found fighting against God. The language of “hands” is not explicitly used in Gamaliel’s speech, but his call for “release” urges the leaders to pry their hands *off* the apostles.

**5:12–16 – The Divine Authentication of the Apostles**

* **V. 12 –** Luke begins this second, high-altitude overview of the church’s wellbeing with a look at the apostolic power and unity it enjoyed. This is what their enemies try to attack.
  + He begins by drawing attention to the power of the apostles (“at the hands of the apostles”) and how the witness of “many signs and wonders” continued “among the people.”
  + This section is like earlier summary statements (2:42–47; 4:32–35), but here Luke puts a greater emphasis on the power of the apostles because they are about to collide with the local powers that be.[[27]](#footnote-27) In the same vein, the fact that the church was unified “in Solomon’s Portico” recalls 3:11 and signifies a rematch is underway. It not only places them in the vicinity of the Temple—the “stomping grounds” of the religious rulers—but the mention of “Solomon” could also—in light of the contextual power struggle—further associate the church with the true kingdom power of God. After all, if “Solomon’s” name wasn’t specifically important to Luke’s point, he could’ve simply said they were “in the temple” or “in the portico.”
* **V.** **13 –** Verse 13 shows how the church stood in relation to those around them. Luke says, “none of the rest dared to associate with them.”
  + The identity of “the rest” is debated,[[28]](#footnote-28) but in the context of verse 11—which distinguishes “the church” from “all [the rest]”—“the rest” apparently refers to unbelievers who were awed by the miracles of healing and judgment, yet sought to keep themselves at “a healthy distance.”[[29]](#footnote-29) They kept this distance merely for self-protection, since Luke says that they nevertheless held the church “in high esteem.” These people watched a church like people watch a lion roaming free of its cage. Noting this helps to show readers how the Jewish leaders foolishly decide to pick a fight with the lion.
* **Vv. 14–16 –** Luke further describes the strength of the church by noting how the church was enjoying unprecedented growth (“more than ever…multitudes of men and women”) from “the Lord” (the true Sovereign). Clearly God stands behind His Church. And this is illustrated in verse 15 when people brought their sick before Peter on beds (like they did for Jesus in Luke 5:17–26), hoping that his shadow could heal them. Beyond this, verse 16 describes how “the multitude from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together” so that their sick and demon-possessed could be healed. Luke says that “all” were healed, and what’s important to see is that the scope of the apostolic witness is now spilling over into the areas *beyond* Jerusalem proper (cf. 1:8). The apostles are going viral, and the Jewish leaders are getting jealous.
  + **Shadow healing?** – Scholars note how some people believed shadows could heal, and yet “Luke does not say whether the apostles encouraged such beliefs.”[[30]](#footnote-30) While this is true, the proximity to verse 16, the parallel to Paul’s remarkable healing episode (Acts 19:12), and the association of shadows with the power of the object that casts them (cf. Luke 1:79), seems to argue that these people were actually healed by Peter’s shadow. Still, Luke’s language brings out the *eagerness* of the people to be healed and the *potency* of Peter’s abilities[[31]](#footnote-31)—abilities that will soon be challenged by the religious rulers.

**5:17–26 – The Human Attempt to Overthrow the Apostles**

**Context:** A continuous reading of Acts would reveal that this section is remarkably similar to earlier scenes in which apostolic healings “led to their arrest by the temple authorities and to a hearing”[[32]](#footnote-32) as well. However, this section is different because we see the enemies of the gospel gradually becoming more desperate as they run out of options. First, they threaten (4:5–22). Now, they seek the death penalty (5:33). Eventually, they outright kill Stephen (6:8–8:2).[[33]](#footnote-33) But despite all their gusto, Luke reiterates how the gospel keeps on advancing despite anything sinners do to stop it.[[34]](#footnote-34)

* **Vv. 17–18 –** As an indicator of tension, Luke mentions how the high priest rose up with his posse (the Sadducees)[[35]](#footnote-35) against Peter and the apostles because they were “filled with jealousy” that the apostles were becoming more dominant—a move which “ironically concedes the apostles’ superiority.”[[36]](#footnote-36) Yet, from their jealousy, they “laid hands on the apostles” and jailed them. In the context, it will become clear that “All [such] heavy-handed attempts to curb the spread of the gospel are doomed to fail.”[[37]](#footnote-37)
  + **Public Jail / Jailed Publicly:** The adjective used for “public” can also be used adverbially (like in Acts 16:37; 18:28; 20:20) and so “the meaning may be that they ‘put them in prison publicly’, that is, they acted in a way that publicly demonstrated their authority over the apostles.”[[38]](#footnote-38)
* **Vv. 19–21a –** The reader is hardly done with verse 18 when Luke reveals that “during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the prison, and taking them out, he said, ‘Go and speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this Life.” And “upon hearing this, they entered into the temple about daybreak and began to teach.” A few points are key:
  + “If the Jewish leaders acted publicly to assert their influence, *an angel of the Lord* acted secretly *(during the night)* to rescue and re-commission the apostles.”[[39]](#footnote-39)
  + “The irony of this angelic breakout is that the Sadducees did not believe in angels (23:8).”[[40]](#footnote-40)
  + Luke also shows how the apostles are ready to obey God rather than men (cf. v. 29).
  + The message of “this Life” refers to the gospel as it harkens back to Jesus as the “Author of Life” (3:15; 11:18; 13:46, 48), but the language puts the apostles on the side of “life,” implying their enemies are on the side of death (cf. Prov 8:36).
* **Vv. 21b–23** – Luke resumes the story describing how the Jewish opponents came back into the scene to exercise their power. They “called the Sanhedrin together…and sent orders to the jailhouse for them to be brought.”
  + Luke stressed how this included “all the Council of the sons of Israel”—a phrase which heightens the sense of formality here far above the more low-key language of 4:5–7.
    - “The phrase “the full council of the sons of Israel” (lit.) comes from Exod 12:21… This description of the council in Jerusalem probably expresses the self-understanding of the Sanhedrin, whose leaders claimed theological and ethical… responsibility not only over the Jews in Judea but over the entire Jewish people in Palestine and in the diaspora. The solemn description indicates that all available leaders of the Jewish people are present, and it underscores their defeat as a result of God’s intervention during the previous night.”[[41]](#footnote-41)
  + Beyond this, their authority is in further platformed as they attempt to give “orders,” but it (comically) unravels as their “officers” reveal that the apostles had slipped through their grasp. The jail protocols were up to snuff (v. 23), but they were no match for what God could do.
* **V. 24 –** Luke notes how this news shook Israel’s chain of command, leaving the leaders “perplexed about them as to what would come of this.”
* **Vv. 25–26** – The leadership soon finds themselves to have lost the upper hand when they hear that “the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!” And Luke then records how the captain and the officers went to round them up again “without violence (for they were afraid of the people, that they might be stoned).” This last phrase shows how the ranks of the Jewish leaders once propelled by envy are now driven by fear.
  + “One must not miss the irony in this entire fiasco. The Sanhedrin was totally thwarted in its designs, totally helpless to control the situation. All was in God’s hands. The only reason the apostles finally appeared before the Council was their own willingness to do so. And they were willing to do so because the events of the night had convinced them once more that they were very much in God’s hands.”[[42]](#footnote-42)

**Day 3 – Questions**

1. Why didn’t unbelievers dare to associate with the early Christians? How do you think you would have felt if you were a part of that church and just witnessed what happened with Ananias and Saphira?
2. What’s ironic about the angel setting the apostles free from prison?
3. How does it encourage you to see God toying with the enemies of the cross like this?

**Day 4 – The Threat of External Persecution (5:12–42) – Part 2**

* Now that the opponents of Christ have found themselves flummoxed and outmatched by the apostles, we get to witness another engagement in which both sides double down.
* Garland writes, “The apostles have a rematch with the Sanhedrin. Peter’s speech emphasizes obedience, and the clear implication is that these religious leaders are *not* obeying God.”[[43]](#footnote-43)
* Polhill adds, “The trial scene falls into two rather balanced parts, focusing on the witness of the Christians (5:27–32) and the intercession of Gamaliel (5:33–40).”[[44]](#footnote-44)

**5:27–32 – The Witness of the Apostles**

* **Vv. 27–28** – The language here puts the apostles on the hot seat. The leadership “brought them” and “stood them before the Sanhedrin” and then “questioned them.” (Note this is the same place Jesus stood in Luke 22:66). Luke then reveals the words of the high priest which stress how “strictly” they “commanded” the apostles to cease and desist from teaching in Jesus’ name (for they’re motivated by jealousy, v. 17). He then raises a fuss about how they have transgressed such mighty commands and instead “filled Jerusalem with your teaching” and sought to condemn these leaders (“bring this man’s blood upon us”). From this, readers can see how the Sanhedrin is angrily trying to avoid (1) a loss of control, and (2) a sense of guilt. But as readers should keep in mind, “Peter, of course, was not trying to get the leaders killed but rather to get them saved.”[[45]](#footnote-45)
* **V. 29 –** As the Sanhedrin wags a condescending finger at the apostles, Peter and the apostles respond, "We must obey God rather than men.” This checks the authority of the Sanhedrin Council and further condemns them for hindering the spread of the gospel.
* **Vv. 30–32** – The apostles then launch into a story that reminds the leaders about God (“the God of **our** fathers”) raising Jesus from the dead—the man these leaders killed and cursed (cf. “hanging Him on a tree” cf. Gal 3:13; Deut 21:23). In other words, the apostles are just the messengers. It is the God of Israel who has a message for His people.
  + The language of “put to death” is key for the broader section because the translation is literally “laid violent hands upon”—demonstrating the futility of their efforts. After all, God not only raised Jesus from the dead, but He also “exalted [Christ] to His right ***hand,***” which is the position of highest power in the universe. For the leaders to try to exert their hand/power over the people of Christ is perfectly foolish.
  + Again, Peter’s desire is to get these Sanhedrin saved, which is clear from how he mentions Christ was exalted “as a Prince[/Leader] and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” Jesus is not only dominant—He’s kind, and if the religious leaders would repent, they will know their sins to be forgiven.
  + The language of Prince/Leader is key in the context because it demonstrates that Jesus is truly the Sovereign that all people must bow to—including the Sanhedrin:
  + “Jesus is “Leader” (ἀρχηγός)—Israel’s prince who shares God’s authority and who initiated the restoration of the kingdom, the pioneer who opened the path to eternal life in the messianic kingdom and thus to eternal life, the Author of Life in the new covenant in which God’s people enjoy the fullness of life (see on 3:15).”[[46]](#footnote-46)
* Peter ends by saying that he and the apostles are simply “witnesses of these things” along with “the Holy Spirit, whom God [sovereignly] gave to those who obey Him.” Hence, the Sanhedrin is not only disobedient, but void of the Spirit’s help and therefore wrapped up in a war they won’t win.[[47]](#footnote-47)

**5:33–42 – The Decision of the Sanhedrin**

* **V. 33 –** Verse 33 acts like a pivot in the text, highlighting how the Sanhedrin—now furious (lit. cut in their hearts)—sought “to kill” the apostles. As noted, this is far worse than the “smack on the wrist” they delivered in chapter 4. But in God’s providence, a member of the Sanhedrin steps in, calling for the council members to cool their jets.
* **V. 34 –** Before the Sanhedrin could act, Luke records how “a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, respected by all the people, stood up in the Council and gave orders to put the men outside for a short time.” In doing this, Gamaliel made some breathing room, but time will show that “Gamaliel’s speech is not a speech in defense of the apostles but in defense of the integrity of the Sanhedrin.”[[48]](#footnote-48) “His argument is pragmatic rather than pro-Christian.”[[49]](#footnote-49) For now, however, Luke gives Gamaliel a glowing resume as “a Pharisee” (reflecting his status), “a teacher of the law” (reflecting his reputation for wise words), and one “respected by all the people” (reflecting his social pull).[[50]](#footnote-50) Because the chief priests were already said to be afraid of “the people” (5:26), there are several reasons to listen to this man.
* **Vv. 35–37 –** Gamaliel addresses the people and calls them to be careful (take care) and not rush to decisions. His reasoning is historical.
  + Gamaliel first recalls a man named Theudas[[51]](#footnote-51) who rose up, claiming to be of great reputation (Acts 8:9; Gal 2:6), and he gained a following four hundred strong. And yet, Gamaliel also recalls how he was killed, his followers dispersed, and it “came to nothing.” In other words, time dissolved the rebellion, so the Sanhedrin didn’t have to.
  + The second lesson is similar, involving a man named Judas the Galilean.[[52]](#footnote-52) Like Theudas before him, Judas “drew away people after him” but eventually “perished” and his followers “were scattered,” bringing his rebellion to a halt. Again, the principle is that Sanhedrin intervention wasn’t needed to put these rebels down. Time did it for them. For this reason, Gamaliel urges them to “back off and give it time.”
* **Vv. 38–39 –** Gamaliel calls the others to heed the lessons of recent history (“in the present case”) and calls them to “stay away from these men and leave them alone, for if this plan or action is of men, it will be overthrown.”
  + Literarily, the call to “leave them alone” serves to contrast the Sanhedrin’s desire to “lay hands on” the apostles and exercise control over them.
  + Interestingly, Gamaliel also adds a warning: “but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or you may even be found fighting against God.” Claiming that they would not be “able” to overthrow them indicates they don’t have the strength to do so (which Luke has already shown in the miraculous release from prison). But Luke gives a second consequence which is that they may be found “fighting against God,” which is not only “not a good look” for the Sanhedrin, but it’s also Luke’s entire point as to what they’re doing.
* **V. 40 –** Verse 40 summarizes how “they followed his advice” and, after a beating (cf. Luke 22:63) and a scolding, they let the apostles off the hook. Importantly, they were still huffing and puffing with their “commands” about not speaking “in the name of Jesus,” but ultimately, their actions were louder than their words, and they “released them.”
* **Vv. 41–42 –**  Luke closes the episode with a shot of the apostles going “on their way…rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for the Name” (cf. John 15:21; Matt 5:10–11). And, somewhat comically, Luke says simply that “every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.” Simply put, man could do nothing to overthrow the work of God in His Church, which has now successfully weathered the threat of external persecution.
  + “Luke uses the verb “to bring good news” (εὐαγγελιζόμενοι) here for the first time in Acts,”[[53]](#footnote-53) and “this verb becomes a key term in subsequent chapters (8:4, 12, 25, 35, 40; 10:36; 11:20; 13:32; 14:7, 15, 21; 15:35; 16:10; 17:18), where it is sometimes combined with the notion of proclaiming the kingdom of God, as in the ministry of Jesus himself (cf. Lk. 4:43; 8:1; 16:16).”[[54]](#footnote-54)

# **Day Four – Questions**

1. What about Peter’s sermon indicates that he wants the leaders to be saved?
2. Why were the Sanhedrin members inclined to listen to Gamaliel?
3. What made the apostles rejoice in their suffering? How can they inspire us to rejoice in our suffering?

**Day 5 – The Threat of Internal Strife (6:1–7)**

* **Overview:** The third section (Acts 6:1–7) describes how God’s grace overcomes the threat of internal strife. In short, growth brought growing pains. Emotional fissures began to form between believers due to some getting overlooked in the growth (v. 1). So, the apostles summoned the congregation to build out the serving infrastructure of the church (vv. 2–4). All this was done so the word would not have to be neglected (v. 2). The church put forth seven men who were empowered for this kind of service. They were endorsed by the apostles (vv. 5–6), and from that point on, the church continued to grow (v. 7)—this time with better support structures than before. Thus, God used this challenge to strengthen His Church.
* **Textual Key:** Readers should note the key idea here of “multiplying,” since Luke begins and ends his section with this term (vv. 1, 7).[[55]](#footnote-55) This word serves as the bookends for the episode, inside of which Luke tells the story of how the church leaders were forced to get wiser about how to serve their growing congregation. More people brought more problems, but the apostles were eager to find a solution for the good of everyone involved.
* **Contextual Function:** Garland writes, “The church’s togetherness comes under threat. The tightly knit group is beginning to show signs of unraveling. This clash, under God’s providence, leads to the transfer of authority to new figures who will play a significant role in the growth of the church’s mission. The solution…[of] commissioning Hellenist deacons to assist the apostles provides an impetus to the gentile mission. This passage serves as preparation for the story to move to the next stages in the narrative, from the mission in Jerusalem to the mission into Samaria and into the gentile world.”[[56]](#footnote-56)

**6:1–7 – The Infrastructure for Growth**

* **V. 1 –** Verse 1 introduces the issue at hand. After the apostles were released from custody (“in those days”), but “while the disciples were multiplying in number,” Luke mentions that an emotional fissure began to form between different groups of Christians. The “Hellenist” Jews began to lodge a “complaint” (lit. “grumbling”) against the “Hebrew” Jews, “because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food.”
  + Obviously, widows must be cared for by the congregation (cf. Jas 1:27; 1 Tim 5:3), and so it’s clear that the ministerial infrastructure of the church was not yet able to accommodate the needs of the congregation and something had to be done.
  + Importantly, Hellenists and Hebrews “describe a linguistic distinction, not ethnic differences…The “Hellenists” were Greek-speaking Jews who had returned from the diaspora to live in Jerusalem, attending their own synagogues (6:9; 9:29).”[[57]](#footnote-57) This is an in-house conflict between Jewish Christians, and contextually (in Acts), it serves to establish the proper infrastructure that would *eventually* accommodate a Gentile mission.
* **Vv. 2–4 –** Verses 2–4 describe how the apostles address the issue. Readers should note that, at this point in the story, “the twelve” are the only official leaders of the church. They’ve been entrusted by God with the responsibility of giving His people soul food (cf. 2:42), and they know that their unique position cannot be *neglected* for the sake of serving physical food. Hence, they lead the church by clarifying in verse 2 “it is not pleasing to God for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables.” This requires two clarifications:
  + - First, “Luke does not intend to create a dichotomy between preaching the word and caring for the poor.”[[58]](#footnote-58)Instead, *everyone* is to care for the poor, but circumstances may require different people to serve differently.
    - Second, in the same vein, this doesn’t lock preachers up into ivory towers. As Garland says, “The Twelve have a different function from the Seven, which does not mean that the Twelve should never be involved in the relief of the needs of the poor, nor that the Seven cannot preach (which is what Stephen does, cf. vv. 8–10, and later Philip).”[[59]](#footnote-59) The main issue here is the need to avoid “neglect” of “the word of God” due to an overloading of the church’s infrastructure (apostolic bandwidth). The church needs to come together to help keep the main thing the main thing.
  + Having clarified the danger, the apostles then lead the congregation forward by calling them to “select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom.” Notably, they decentralize command by entrusting the congregation to put forth seven candidates who are men of sound character and biblical wisdom. Luke may have recorded that there were specifically “seven” (out of thousands) in order to indicate the sufficiency of this motion to meet the need (as seven is a number of completeness). In other words, they didn’t designate 1 guy to be the fire-eater for what might have been hundreds of disgruntled Hellenists. They wanted the church to have several men whom they already admired (of good reputation) to help meet this need.
  + In verse 4, the apostles clarify once again, “but we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the service of the word.” This is not because they don’t want to get their hands dirty, but rather because they value the burden and responsibility of stewarding God’s word and keeping their minds clear in prayer. Without the word of God, the church becomes a country club.
* **Vv. 5–6 –** Notably, the congregation was wholeheartedly onboard with building out its infrastructure for the sake of greater service. Luke says, “this word pleased the whole congregation” in part because they knew “it is not pleasing *to God*” for the word to be neglected (note the repetition). So they didn’t act for personal convenience or out of apostolic intimidation; they acted for the honor of God in His Church.
  + Luke takes time to list the individuals chosen by the church, so we should take time to consider them.
    - First, he mentions “Stephen” and describes him as “a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit.” Not only does he meet the apostle’s qualifications for this role (v. 3), but this description prepares readers for the future episode with Stephen starting in verse 8. Readers will discover that Stephen becomes the first martyr, but here you see that he was a man of godly character before then.
    - Next, Luke lists, “Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas.” As Peterson says, “Those chosen for the role all have Greek names. This does not prove that they were all Hellenists (Greek names such as Andrew, Philip, and Bartholomew are found among the apostles), though, given the situation, it is likely that they were.”[[60]](#footnote-60) With Theophilus being a Greek-speaking Gentile, this may have been what he gleaned from reading these names in this context.
    - Finally, Nicholas is described as “a proselyte from Antioch,” which, Garland writes, “prepares the way for those who were not born Jews to join the church. That he hails from Antioch is important. The church there is started and endorsed by people from Jerusalem. It would become the bridgehead for the mission into the gentile world and later commission Paul and Barnabas along with others for this ministry.”[[61]](#footnote-61)
  + Finally, readers see in verse 6 how the church “brought” the men “before the apostles;” whereupon the apostles prayed about it and ultimately “laid their hands on them,” thereby formally designating them for service.
    - **The Laying on of Hands –** The laying on of hands is an Old Testament practice that demonstrates a person’s identification with another person/thing (Lev 3:13; cf. Heb 5:2).[[62]](#footnote-62) In Acts, when the apostles lay hands on someone, those people sometimes receive miraculous power (cf. 8:17; 19:6), but at other times, the act simply signifies a formal identification (as in 13:3). Here, the apostles are present, but the emphasis is on identification, for these men were already “full of the Holy Spirit” (v. 3),[[63]](#footnote-63) and they didn’t need miraculous power to serve tables for other believers.
    - **Are These Men Deacons?** – While these men are servants of the church, they’re not necessarily official “deacons” in the sense we mean it. They’re often considered “proto-deacons” because they illustrate what deacons should do.
  + “Often the present passage is seen to be the initiation of the diaconate. The word “deacon” (*diakonos*) never occurs in the passage. The word “ministry” (*diakonia*) does occur several times, but it is applied to both the ministry of the daily distribution (v. 2) and the ministry of the word, the apostolic witness (v. 4). In fact, the word “deacon” never occurs in Acts. The office generally referred to is “elder” (Acts 11:30; 14:23, et passim). If one is inclined nevertheless to see the diaconate in this passage, that person should take a cue from Stephen and Philip. In the rest of Acts, nothing is made of their administrative duties. What one finds them doing is bearing their witness, even to martyrdom.”[[64]](#footnote-64)
* **V. 7 –** Luke closes this episode with a statement about how “the word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to multiply greatly in Jerusalem.”
  + The point that “the word of God kept on spreading” is a way of describing how the threat of internal strife has been successfully overcome—the word has *not* been neglected—and therefore the church is in a better position to continue the work of proclamation and service to the people of God.
  + The marker of “in Jerusalem” ties to 1:8 and reminds Theophilus what section of gospel advancement we’re in. This sets the stage for Stephen’s defense in the next section that launches the gospel *beyond* Jerusalem.
  + In light of the focus on Jerusalem, Luke also ends with a mention of how “a great many priests were becoming obedient to the faith.” The reason for this—given the context of preparing for Gentile mission—appears to be to highlight how God was still nevertheless working in Jerusalem among the priests for the time being. The episode frames how God prepared the church’s *heart* and *infrastructure* to accommodate a future Gentile mission, but for the present moment, the focus remains settled on the Jewish people.

# **Day Five – Questions**

* Does this text support the idea that the apostles considered themselves too important to get their hands dirty and serve tables? Why or why not?
* What was the main motivation behind appointing more leaders to serve the widows? How does this motivation safeguard the growth of the church? Do you have that motivation about things you want to see improved at FBC?

1. Categories taken from Marty, “Acts,” *The Moody Bible Commentary*, 1682–86. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Schnabel, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/exegcommacts?ref=Bible.Ac4.32&off=1214&ctx=eings+and+God.%E2%80%9D1231%0a~The+term+translated+), ZECNT, 269. “The term translated as “mind” (ψυχή, Hebr. נֶפֶשׁ, *nepesh*), interpreted in an Old Testament and Jewish context, denotes the vital self of the believers. In the command to “love with all your *nepesh*,” the term usually translated as “soul” serves to elevate “the intensity of involvement of the entire being.” The phrase “one mind” (ψυχὴ μία) would have reminded educated Gentile readers (listeners) of the Greek idea that “friends are one soul.” The collocation “heart and mind” (καρδία καὶ ψυχή) occurs repeatedly in the Old Testament and describes complete and total devotion to God in the context of the commandment to love Yahweh and worship him.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Peterson, [*The Acts of the Apostles*](https://ref.ly/logosres/pntcacts?ref=Bible.Ac4.32-37&off=41&ctx=enerosity+(4%3a32%E2%80%9337)%0a~Luke+again+highlight), 203. Cf. 2 Corinthians 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Polhill, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nac26?ref=Bible.Ac4.34-35&off=761&ctx=no+poor+among+them.%0a~Verses+34b%E2%80%9335+depict), 153. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Peterson, [*The Acts of the Apostles*](https://ref.ly/logosres/pntcacts?ref=Bible.Ac4.36-37&off=171&ctx=Levite+from+Cyprus.+~Several+first-centur), 206. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Every other time Luke uses “son of” in Acts, it refers to someone who has the character traits of the “father-figure” (cf. Acts 7:56; 9:20; 13:22; 16:1; 23:6; Luke 1:32; 19:9). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Garland, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/ttc65ac?ref=Bible.Ac4.36-37&off=602&ctx=+with+Paul+(15%3a37).%0a~The+field+that+Barna), 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Garland, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/ttc65ac?ref=Bible.Ac4.36-37&off=602&ctx=+with+Paul+(15%3a37).%0a~The+field+that+Barna), 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Garland, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/ttc65ac?ref=Bible.Ac4.36-37&off=602&ctx=+with+Paul+(15%3a37).%0a~The+field+that+Barna), 51. Ananias is also tied to Judas due to the influence of Satan on his heart (Luke 22:3; Acts 5:3), and the use of the same term for “field” as Judas in 1:18 (cf. 5:3). Grammatically, Theophilus wouldn’t have to read very far in order to see the same themes reemerge. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Polhill, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nac26?ref=Bible.Ac5.1-11&off=2132&ctx=at+it+does+not+say.%0a~The+passage+falls+in), 156. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Polhill, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nac26?ref=Bible.Ac5.1-11&off=3249&ctx=part+of+the+money.%E2%80%9D+~There+is+a+mild+iron), 156. Similar to “Hannah.” [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Schnabel, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/exegcommacts?ref=Bible.Ac5.1-16&off=11729&ctx=nd+for+our+passage%3a+~%E2%80%9CNow+a+husband+and+w), 279–280; Peterson, [*The Acts of the Apostles*](https://ref.ly/logosres/pntcacts?ref=Bible.Ac5.1-2&off=455&ctx=ellion+against+God.+~Here+is+one+of+sever), 209. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Schnabel, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/exegcommacts?ref=Bible.Ac5.1&off=329&ctx=unity+of+believers.+~Ananias+%CE%91%CC%94%CE%BD%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%B9%CC%81%CE%B1%CF%82+is), 282. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Polhill, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nac26?ref=Bible.Ac5.1&off=270&ctx=+part+of+the+money.+~The+verb+means+to+pi), 156. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Peterson, [*The Acts of the Apostles*](https://ref.ly/logosres/pntcacts?ref=Bible.Ac5.5&off=759&ctx=7%3b+2+Cor.+6%3a14%E2%80%9318).+~Parallels+are+someti), 211. He writes, “Parallels are sometimes drawn with the story of Achan’s sin and the summary judgment that fell upon him and his family in Joshua 7. The most that can be said is that a serious act of deceit marked the early days of the life of God’s people under both covenants and that a remarkable expression of God’s wrath followed. In both cases, the event was a manifestation of God’s distinctive presence with his people and a warning about his intention to preserve their holy identity and character.” [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Polhill, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nac26?ref=Bible.Ac5.2-3&off=194&ctx=+text+does+not+say.+~The+emphasis+on+the+), 157. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Polhill, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nac26?ref=Bible.Ac5.2-3&off=1174&ctx=arthly+possessions.+~To+lie+with+regard+t), 157. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Peterson, [*The Acts of the Apostles*](https://ref.ly/logosres/pntcacts?ref=Bible.Ac5.1-11&off=723&ctx=+fellowship+(v.+9).+~%E2%80%98The+powerful+opposi), 208. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Marty, “Acts,” *The Moody Bible Commentary*, 1683. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Schnabel, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/exegcommacts?ref=Bible.Ac5.6&off=337&ctx=e+been+younger+than+~18+years%2c+which+was+), 285. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Schnabel, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/exegcommacts?ref=Bible.Ac5.7&off=919&ctx=hree+hour+interval.+~Since+this+was+a+wea), 286. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Polhill, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nac26?ref=Bible.Ac5.7&off=654&ctx=ng+for+her+husband%3f%0a~Luke+was+not+interes), 159. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Schnabel, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/exegcommacts?ref=Bible.Ac5.8&off=1826&ctx=for+their+property.%0a~Sapphira+confirms+th), 286. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Schnabel, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/exegcommacts?ref=Bible.Ac5.9&off=807&ctx=+out+the+deception.%0a~While+Peter+stated+e), 287. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Peterson, [*The Acts of the Apostles*](https://ref.ly/logosres/pntcacts?ref=Bible.Ac5.10&off=3&ctx=as+well+(v.+10).%0a10+~The+sudden+death+of+), 212–213. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Polhill, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nac26?ref=Bible.Ac5.11&off=92&ctx=sband+(cf.+v.+5b)%3a+%E2%80%9C~Great+fear+seized+th), 159–160. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Polhill, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nac26?ref=Bible.Ac5.12-16&off=685), 162–163. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Marshall, [*Acts: An Introduction and Commentary*](https://ref.ly/logosres/tntc65acus?ref=Bible.Ac5.13&off=4&ctx=Portico+(3%3a11).%0a13.+~The+rest+is+a+puzzli), 122; Peterson, [*The Acts of the Apostles*](https://ref.ly/logosres/pntcacts?ref=Bible.Ac5.13-14&off=6&ctx=her+together.%0a13%E2%80%9314+~Many+in+Jerusalem+we), 214. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Polhill, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nac26?ref=Bible.Ac5.12-14&off=1735), 163–164. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Schnabel, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/exegcommacts?ref=Bible.Ac5.15&off=3760&ctx=ave+been+found.1368+~Luke+does+not+say+wh), 293. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Polhill, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nac26?ref=Bible.Ac5.15&off=621&ctx=+their+person.%EF%BB%BF109%EF%BB%BF+~Whether+or+not+they+), 164. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Polhill, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nac26?ref=Bible.Ac5.17-42), 164. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Polhill, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nac26?ref=Bible.Ac5.17-42&off=621&ctx=y+intensified.%EF%BB%BF112%EF%BB%BF+~With+the+growing+suc), 164–165. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Peterson, [*The Acts of the Apostles*](https://ref.ly/logosres/pntcacts?ref=Bible.Ac5.17-33&off=282&ctx=f+the+narrative.%E2%80%9932+~The+repetitive+patte), 216. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. “While in the gospel, Luke portrays the Pharisees as the major opponents of Jesus, in Acts it is the Sadducees which are often seen as more hostile against the followers of Jesus. This shift is explained by the move from Galilee to Jerusalem, where the Sadducees seem to have had control of the Sanhedrin.” Schnabel, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/exegcommacts?ref=Bible.Ac5.17&off=1356&ctx=owers+of+Jesus.1387+~While+in+the+gospel%2c), 305. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Garland, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/ttc65ac?ref=Bible.Ac5.17-18&off=30&ctx=lled+with+jealousy.+~The+Sadducean+cabal+), 58–59. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Garland, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/ttc65ac?ref=Bible.Ac5.12-42&off=57&ctx=ersecution%0aBig+Idea%0a~All+heavy-handed+att), 57. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Peterson, [*The Acts of the Apostles*](https://ref.ly/logosres/pntcacts?ref=Bible.Ac5.17-18&off=1243&ctx=son+with+4%3a1%E2%80%9331.%EF%BB%BF39+~When+it+is+said+that), 218. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Peterson, [*The Acts of the Apostles*](https://ref.ly/logosres/pntcacts?ref=Bible.Ac5.19&off=3&ctx=+the+apostles.40%0a19+~If+the+Jewish+leader), 218. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Garland, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/ttc65ac?ref=Bible.Ac5.19-21&off=80&ctx=d+brought+them+out.+~The+irony+of+this+an), 59. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Schnabel, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/exegcommacts?ref=Bible.Ac5.21e-i&off=1053&ctx=(%CE%B7%CC%94+%CE%B3%CE%B5%CF%81%CE%BF%CF%85%CF%83%CE%B9%CC%81%CE%B1).1401+~The+phrase+%E2%80%9Cthe+full), 307. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Polhill, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nac26?ref=Bible.Ac5.25-26&off=799&ctx=regard+(cf.+v.+13).+~One+must+not+miss+th), 167. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Garland, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/ttc65ac?ref=Bible.Ac5.27-33&off=51&ctx=+than+human+beings!+~The+apostles+have+a+), 59. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Polhill, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nac26?ref=Bible.Ac5.27-40&off=1842&ctx=s%2c+and+let+them+go.%0a~This+second+appearan), 168. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Polhill, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nac26?ref=Bible.Ac5.29&off=5&ctx=s+paraphrase).%0a5%3a29+~Peter%2c+of+course%2c+wa), 169. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Schnabel, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/exegcommacts?ref=Bible.Ac5.31&off=739&ctx=+Leader+and+Savior.%0a~Jesus+is+%E2%80%9CLeader%E2%80%9D+(%CE%B1), 312. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Marshall, [*Acts: An Introduction and Commentary*](https://ref.ly/logosres/tntc65acus?ref=Bible.Ac5.32&off=386&ctx=he+exalted+Messiah.+~Peter+adds+pointedly), 127. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Schnabel, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/exegcommacts?ref=Bible.Ac5.34&off=525&ctx=+apostles+executed.+~Gamaliel%E2%80%99s+speech+is), 313. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Schnabel, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/exegcommacts?ref=Bible.Ac5.39&off=880&ctx=s+personal+opinion.+~His+argument+is+prag), 317. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Peterson, [*The Acts of the Apostles*](https://ref.ly/logosres/pntcacts?ref=Bible.Ac5.34&off=1403&ctx=ip+of+his+school.65+~He+was+so+highly+est), 224. “He was so highly esteemed that the Mishnah declares: ‘Since Rabban Gamaliel the elder died there has been no more reverence for the law; and purity and abstinence died out at the same time’ (*m. Soṭah* 9:15).” [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Scholars try to debunk Luke’s accuracy by claiming an anachronism here. The only available historical record of a “Theudas” movement was *after* Gamaliel would’ve said this. But the simple answer to this is that, because the name Theudas was “not uncommon,” there could have easily been others who had this name. Polhill, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nac26?ref=Bible.Ac5.36-37&off=1164&ctx=lic+object+lesson).%0a~If+Luke+and+Josephus), 172. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. History records that Judas “was a rebel against the new taxation arrangements which came into force when Archelaus was deposed in ad 6 and the Romans took over direct rule of Judea (Jos., *Ant.* 18:4, 23; 20:102). Only in Acts is it recorded that he was put to death, which is entirely probable.” Marshall, [*Acts: An Introduction and Commentary*](https://ref.ly/logosres/tntc65acus?ref=Bible.Ac5.37&off=4&ctx=ed+out+of+hand.%0a37.+~Judas+the+Galilean+w), 130. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Schnabel, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/exegcommacts?ref=Bible.Ac5.42&off=1079&ctx=%CF%87%CF%81%CE%B9%CF%83%CF%84%CE%BF%CC%81%CE%BD+%CE%99%CC%93%CE%B7%CF%83%CE%BF%CF%85%CD%82%CE%BD).%0a~Luke+uses+the+verb+%E2%80%9C), 320. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Peterson, [*The Acts of the Apostles*](https://ref.ly/logosres/pntcacts?ref=Bible.Ac5.41-42&off=2374&ctx=us+is+the+Messiah).+~This+verb+becomes+a+), 228. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Garland, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/ttc65ac?ref=Bible.Ac6.1-7&off=573&ctx=The+Text+in+Context%0a~This+unit+is+set+off), 63. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Garland, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/ttc65ac?ref=Bible.Ac6.1-7&off=1602&ctx=endent+community.%E2%80%9D1+~The+church%E2%80%99s+togethe), 63–64. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Schnabel, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/exegcommacts?ref=Bible.Ac6.1&off=2077&ctx=-speaking+Jews.1509+~These+terms+describe), 329. Marshall, [*Acts: An Introduction and Commentary*](https://ref.ly/logosres/tntc65acus?ref=Bible.Ac6.1&off=125&ctx=+number+of+members.+~The+terms+Hebrews+an), 133–134; “In 9:29 it refers to Greek-speaking Jews who were hostile to Christianity, but in 11:20 it refers to Greek-speaking persons in Antioch who were not Jews at all. The context defines more precisely in each case what sort of Greek-speaking person Luke has in mind, ‘ranging from Jewish Christians, to Jews, to pagans’. *The Hellenistic Jews* in 6:1 would have been Greek-speaking Jews from the Dispersion or their descendants, who lived in or around Jerusalem and attended synagogues where Greek was spoken (cf. 6:9).” Peterson, [*The Acts of the Apostles*](https://ref.ly/logosres/pntcacts?ref=Bible.Ac6.1&off=3594&ctx=ave+spoken+Greek.12+~In+9%3a29+it+refers+to), 231. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Garland, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/ttc65ac?ref=Bible.Ac6.1-7&off=9657&ctx=ting+on+tables%2c+but+~Luke+does+not+intend), 66. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Schnabel, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/exegcommacts?ref=Bible.Ac6.3&off=1738&ctx=esus%E2%80%99+resurrection.+~The+Twelve+have+a+di), 332. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Peterson, [*The Acts of the Apostles*](https://ref.ly/logosres/pntcacts?ref=Bible.Ac6.5&off=326&ctx=+with+God%E2%80%99s+will.26+~Those+chosen+for+the), 234. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Garland, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/ttc65ac?ref=Bible.Ac6.5-6&off=631&ctx=church%E2%80%99s+expansion.+~Nicolas+is+identifie), 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. This section has several parallels to the commissioning of Joshua (the need for leadership of the masses, the designation of Joshua as one in whom “the Spirit resides,” and how Moses laid his hands upon him to signify his installment to service; cf. Numb 27:17–20). [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Vaughan, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/fsgc65ac?ref=Bible.Ac6.1-7&off=4676&ctx=%3a13)%2c+and+so+forth.+~Bruce+understands+th), 45, citing Bruce. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Polhill, [*Acts*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nac26?ref=Bible.Ac6.6&off=799&ctx=ion+for+a+task.%EF%BB%BF17%EF%BB%BF+~Often+the+present+pa), 182–183. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)