

**United by the Holy Spirit****Acts 5:12—32**

With the Holy Spirit once again filling the Apostles and those who were with them (Acts 4:31), they were all moved to sell their possessions and put the proceeds into a common pot. They didn't need to work because the Tribulation was soon to come and there was still much to be done, reaching out to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Although many put the church into this section of Acts, there is absolutely no evidence that this is the case. The message is the same (The Gospel of the Kingdom), Peter is still reaching out to Israel only and the Holy Spirit was given to Israel in fulfillment of Scripture. These were indeed the "last days" that Peter spoke of in Acts 2:17. Last days refers to the final days of Israel's prophetic program. Peter would have known that the prophetic program was nearing completion because it was presented so clearly in Daniel 9. Any Jew who studied this chapter could understand when the last days of Israel's prophetic program would be.

This cannot be said for the Church in this Dispensation of Grace. We only know in a very general way that we are in the last days. According to Paul in 2 Timothy 3:1 perilous times shall come. Unlike Daniel, Paul points us to general trends, not prophetic events. Those who do not properly divide Scripture are often guilty of confusing Israel's last days with the last days of this Dispensation of Grace.

**Abundant miracles**

One very distinct characteristic of the time when the Gospel of the Kingdom was being preached was the abundance of miracles, signs and wonders. A sign is a miracle that authenticates a man or his message. A wonder can also refer to a miracle, a term reflecting the result of a miracle on the people witnessing it. All miracles were done with a specific purpose, usually to bring people's attention to God's message.

With Israel's time drawing short, because of the coming of the Tribulation, God's display of miracles among the Apostles is increasing. People were even healed when Peter's shadow passed over them. As verse 16 says, they were all being healed. This was also true when Jesus healed the sick and cast out demons (Luke 6:19; Matthew 4:23; 10:1; 15:29—31). By comparing the healings done by Jesus and the Apostles with those who claim to have the spiritual gift of healing today, it is abundantly clear that the healers today are counterfeits of the real thing.

The events that were happening at the entrance to the temple compound brought fear upon the people and the leaders. The believers experienced great fear when they saw Ananias and Sapphira drop dead when they lied to God (verses 5 and 11). Many of those watching the miracles being performed, and perhaps having heard about the two who had died, were also fearful to the extent that they did not want to associate with this group of believers (verse 13). The leaders of Israel were only afraid of the people, not of God (verse 26). I believe they were thoroughly convinced that they were doing God's work and therefore the Apostles and believers in Jesus Christ needed to be silenced. Their greatest fear was that they would lose their power and control over the people.

The book of James condemns the actions of people like these religious leaders. They were all very well off because they were getting rich on the backs of the flock (Ezekiel 34:1—4). The book of James gives practical advice to the Little Flock of believers on how to get through the Tribulation, but few today understand its dispensational significance and place. Chapter 5 is a condemnation of those who are rich during the Tribulation, because in order to get rich, they will have taken the mark of the beast.

## **Imprisoned and released**

When the religious leaders saw how the Apostles were garnering favor from the people by healing all those who came to them, they (the Sadducees) put the Apostles in prison. They were filled with jealousy. They laid claim to the people of Israel, but the Apostles were getting all the attention and praise from the people. The Angel of the Lord superseded the orders of the religious leaders by opening the gates and taking them out of prison. This was another proof that God was with these men.

Not only were they taken out, they were told to go stand in the temple area and speak boldly to the people. Doing this was further proof that God was in control, not the religious leaders. Again, they needed to obey God rather than men. The Apostles were going to be the new leadership in the Millennial Kingdom while those in charge now will be removed from their position (Matthew 3:10; 21:43; 19:28).

The next morning the guards found the prison all locked up but the prisoners had vanished. The religious leaders had convened a hearing and were waiting for the prisoners to be brought to them. Imagine how surprised they must have been to find the prisoners were no longer in prison, and then to find out they were back at the temple, preaching.

### **Accusations** (verses 27—28)

The leaders were desiring to stop the Apostles from disrupting the existing system of order. The Apostles were preaching a doctrine that accused the religious leaders of killing the Messiah. They were offended that the Apostles were attempting to bring Jesus Christ's blood upon their head. Apparently, they had forgotten that they willingly called for this man's blood to be on their head, and on their children's head when they demanded that Jesus be put to death (Matthew 27:25).

Peter once again has an opportunity to preach Jesus Christ to the council and tell them that they killed the Messiah, that God raised Him up and exalted Him to be a Prince and Savior and that He would give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. Notice that the repentance and forgiveness are future events, which will happen at the Second Coming (Jeremiah 31:34; 33:6—8; Ezekiel 36:25, 33).

Peter calls Jesus Christ a Prince because He will be ruling over Israel in the Kingdom. Ezekiel 34:24 and 37:25 use this term for David. Ezekiel 37:25 says that David will be Israel's prince forever, a reference to David coming back and ruling Israel under Christ, or possibly a reference to Christ, ruling in the line of King David. Jeremiah 30:9 leads me to believe David will have a position in the Millennial Kingdom.

When Jesus Christ claims He can forgive sins, He is claiming He is God. The leaders in Israel understood that no one can forgive sins but God only (Mark 2:7). The ability to forgive sin was also given to the Disciples so that they could continue Jesus' ministry to Israel. This was one reason they needed to be given the Holy Spirit (John 20:22—23). Peter and the other Apostles were fulfilling the so-called Great Commission by beginning their ministry in Jerusalem, and proclaiming the forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus Christ (Luke 24:47).

Pay special attention to whom Jesus came to give repentance. Verse 31 very clearly says Jesus will be giving repentance to Israel, not the church and not the Gentiles. This seems somewhat contradictory when put next to the Great Commission, where Jesus commands them to go to the nations teaching and baptizing them (Matthew 28:19). The answer is that Peter was fulfilling the first part of the Great Commission by going first to the leaders in Jerusalem (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). The fulfillment of the Great Commission will be realized in the Tribulation when everyone will have heard the Gospel of the Kingdom (Matthew 24:14).

For previous notes and additional mid-Acts materials please visit [www.MidActsTruths.com](http://www.MidActsTruths.com)