

The Church at First

Acts 2:36-47

2:36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified."

2:37 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

2:38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

2:39 "For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."

2:40 And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!"

2:41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

2:42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

2:43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.

2:44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common;

2:45 and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.

2:46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,

2:47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Acts 3

3:1 Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer.

3:2 And a man who had been lame from his mother's womb was being carried along, whom they used to set down every day at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, in order to beg alms of those who were entering the temple.

3:3 When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he began asking to receive alms.

3:4 But Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze on him and said, "Look at us!"

3:5 And he began to give them his attention, expecting to receive something from them.

- 3:6** But Peter said, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—walk!"
- 3:7** And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened.
- 3:8** With a leap he stood upright and began to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.
- 3:9** And all the people saw him walking and praising God;
- 3:10** and they were taking note of him as being the one who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate of the temple to beg alms, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.
- 3:11** While he was clinging to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them at the so-called portico of Solomon, full of amazement.
- 3:12** But when Peter saw this, he replied to the people, "Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk?"
- 3:13** "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, the one whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him.
- 3:14** "But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,
- 3:15** but put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses.
- 3:16** "And on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all.
- 3:17** "And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also.
- 3:18** "But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.
- 3:19** "Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;
- 3:20** and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you,
- 3:21** whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.
- 3:22** "Moses said, 'THE LORD GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN; TO HIM YOU SHALL GIVE HEED to everything He says to you.
- 3:23** 'And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'
- 3:24** "And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days.

3:25 "It is you who are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'AND IN YOUR SEED ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED.'

3:26 "For you first, God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways."

Acts 4

4:1 As they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to them,

4:2 being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

4:3 And they laid hands on them and put them in jail until the next day, for it was already evening.

4:4 But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

4:5 On the next day, their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem;

4:6 and Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent.

4:7 When they had placed them in the center, they began to inquire, "By what power, or in what name, have you done this?"

4:8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people,

4:9 if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well,

4:10 let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by this name this man stands here before you in good health.

4:11 "He is the STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED by you, THE BUILDERS, but WHICH BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone.

4:12 "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

4:13 Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.

4:14 And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in reply.

4:15 But when they had ordered them to leave the Council, they began to confer with one another,

4:16 saying, "What shall we do with these men? For the fact that a noteworthy miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it.

- 4:17** "But so that it will not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no longer to any man in this name."
- 4:18** And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.
- 4:19** But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge;
- 4:20** for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard."
- 4:21** When they had threatened them further, they let them go (finding no basis on which to punish them) on account of the people, because they were all glorifying God for what had happened;
- 4:22** for the man was more than forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.
- 4:23** When they had been released, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them.
- 4:24** And when they heard this, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, "O Lord, it is You who MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM,
- 4:25** who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Your servant, said, 'WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE, AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE FUTILE THINGS?
- 4:26** 'THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TOOK THEIR STAND, AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST.'
- 4:27** "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,
- 4:28** to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.
- 4:29** "And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence,
- 4:30** while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus."
- 4:31** And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.
- 4:32** And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them.
- 4:33** And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all.
- 4:34** For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales

4:35 and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need.

4:36 Now Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means Son of Encouragement),

4:37 and who owned a tract of land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Acts 5:11-42

5:11 And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things.

5:12 At the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's portico.

5:13 But none of the rest dared to associate with them; however, the people held them in high esteem.

5:14 And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number,

5:15 to such an extent that they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on any one of them.

5:16 Also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all being healed.

5:17 But the high priest rose up, along with all his associates (that is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with jealousy.

5:18 They laid hands on the apostles and put them in a public jail.

5:19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the gates of the prison, and taking them out he said,

5:20 "Go, stand and speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this Life."

5:21 Upon hearing this, they entered into the temple about daybreak and began to teach. Now when the high priest and his associates came, they called the Council together, even all the Senate of the sons of Israel, and sent orders to the prison house for them to be brought.

5:22 But the officers who came did not find them in the prison; and they returned and reported back,

5:23 saying, "We found the prison house locked quite securely and the guards standing at the doors; but when we had opened up, we found no one inside."

5:24 Now when the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed about them as to what would come of this.

5:25 But someone came and reported to them, "The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!"

- 5:26** Then the captain went along with the officers and proceeded to bring them back without violence (for they were afraid of the people, that they might be stoned).
- 5:27** When they had brought them, they stood them before the Council. The high priest questioned them,
- 5:28** saying, "We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."
- 5:29** But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men.
- 5:30** "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross.
- 5:31** "He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.
- 5:32** "And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."
- 5:33** But when they heard this, they were cut to the quick and intended to kill them.
- 5:34** But 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.
- 5:35** And he said to them, "Men of Israel, take care what you propose to do with these men.
- 5:36** "For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a group of about four hundred men joined up with him. But he was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing.
- 5:37** "After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census and drew away some people after him; he too perished, and all those who followed him were scattered.
- 5:38** "So in the present case, I say to you, stay away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or action is of men, it will be overthrown;
- 5:39** but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God."
- 5:40** They took his advice; and after calling the apostles in, they flogged them and ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and then released them.
- 5:41** So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.
- 5:42** And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

Acts 6

- 6:1** Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food.
- 6:2** So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables.
- 6:3** "Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.
- 6:4** "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."
- 6:5** The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch.
- 6:6** And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them.
- 6:7** The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.
- 6:8** And Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people.
- 6:9** But some men from what was called the Synagogue of the Freedmen, including both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and argued with Stephen.
- 6:10** But they were unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.
- 6:11** Then they secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God."
- 6:12** And they stirred up the people, the elders and the scribes, and they came up to him and dragged him away and brought him before the Council.
- 6:13** They put forward false witnesses who said, "This man incessantly speaks against this holy place and the Law;
- 6:14** for we have heard him say that this Nazarene, Jesus, will destroy this place and alter the customs which Moses handed down to us."
- 6:15** And fixing their gaze on him, all who were sitting in the Council saw his face like the face of an angel.

Acts 7:54–60

- 7:54** Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him.
- 7:55** But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God;
- 7:56** and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."
- 7:57** But they cried out with a loud voice, and covered their ears and rushed at him with one impulse.
- 7:58** When they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him; and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul.
- 7:59** They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"
- 7:60** Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" Having said this, he fell asleep.

Acts 8:1–3

- 8:1** Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.
- 8:2** Some devout men buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him.
- 8:3** But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison.

1 Corinthians 12:13

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

John 17:20-23

20. "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;
21. that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.
22. "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one;
23. I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.