

## **Acts of the Apostles Session 5**

Acts 10-12

“...to the ends of the earth!”

### **Humility (and humiliations!) for the Gospel**

Recap and look forward

- May 27- Acts 13-16
- June 3- Acts 17-20
- June 10- Acts 21-24
- June 17- Acts 24-28
- June 24- Acts 29

Outline for our discussion:

- 10:1-33 -the visions of Peter and Cornelius and their meeting
- 10:34-43 Peter’s preaching of Jesus Christ
- 10:44-49 Coming of the Holy Spirit (!) and Baptism
- 11- Peter explains his actions to the Jerusalem Christians
- 11:19-26 Church in Antioch, “Christians”, Barnabas and Saul
- 11:27-30 prophecy of Agabus and mercy missions
- 12: 1-19 Herod’s persecution of the Church, Martyrdom of James, son of Zebedee, arrest of Peter and Peter’s miraculous release from prison
- 12:20-25 Death of Herod (Julius Agrippa I)

Quiz Time! (answers given at the end of the session)

1. What was the controversy that led the early Church to call and ordain the first deacons?
2. What is the method of reading the Old Testament called where you see Old Testament figures as being fulfilled in Jesus? (used by Stephen in his preaching before his martyrdom)
3. Name two ways that Deacon Philip’s engagement with the Ethiopian eunuch are a **model for evangelization**.
4. Name one place that the famous “Son of Man” from Daniel chapter 7 is referenced in the Gospel of Luke or Acts of the Apostles.

**\*\*\*Cindy and the “standing” of the Son of Man at the right Hand of God in Stephen’s vision\***

**Humility and humiliations:** Saul escaping Damascus in a basket (9:23-25); Peter eating gross stuff, visiting house of a Roman Centurion; a Roman Centurion prostrating before a Jewish fisherman; baptizing pagans; Peter explaining himself before others (newcomers to the Jesus movement!); Herod’s self-exaltation and demise; hilarious liberation of Peter from prison; handing over leadership to James.

*Breakdown of the figure of Saint Peter by Ron Wagner*

- Power of personal testimony
- Depart from me, Lord for I am a sinful man
- Role of humility in the life and ministry of Peter

Peter and Paul intertwining stories over years of ministry: both ending in Rome

**Peter: embattled, humble and holy leader of the Church**

- Miracles at Peter’s hands (end of chapter 9)
- Chapter 10—Peter and Cornelius (probably about 7 years after the events of Pentecost)

- Roman Centurion—the real power of the area was Rome. Commander of 100 men. The *Italica Cohort*, battalion of archers formed in Italy but transferred to Syria.
  - Cornelius in Caesarea, a God-fearer, devout and generous in almsgiving along “with his whole household”
  - 3pm hour of prayer: Angel of the Lord tells him to send for Simon Peter
- Peter’s vision: “Get up. Slaughter and eat...What God has made clean you are not to call profane.”
- NT Wright--“for a particular period and for a particular purpose”
- Not a modern “anything goes, it’s all the same!” attitude
  - Cornelius’ had the **basis** for faith: devout, man of prayer, almsgiving
  - *What God has made clean...what about us?*
- Encounter of Jerusalem (Peter) and Rome (Cornelius): “*We are all here in the presence of God to listen to all that you have been commanded by the Lord*”
  - Preaching of Peter: Kerygma!
    - “In truth, I see that God shows no partiality...”
    - “You know the word He sent to the Israelites...Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all...”
    - Holy Spirit and power...doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil...we are witnesses...the put him to death by hanging him on a tree...
    - **10:40-“...This man God raised on the third day and granted that he be visible, not to all people, but to us, the witnesses chosen by God in advance, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead...He commissioned us to preach...to him all the prophets bear witness...that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name.”**
  - **Fire falls again! (Jerusalem, Samaria, now on Romans!)**
  - “Can anyone withhold the water for Baptizing these people?”
- Chapter 11—rumbles of controversy (much more to come!) including tensions with Rome, unfolding over the next several years.
  - “You entered the house of uncircumcised people and ate with them!”
  - The **Opposition Party...**
  - “When they heard this, they stopped objecting and glorified God...”
- Chapter 12—Herod’s persecution of the Church (12 years after Ascension of Jesus?)
  - **James, son of Zebedee, brother of John**
  - **Make Romans happy, make Jewish leaders happy**
  - **Arrest of Peter:** will be put to death
    - **Olden times: vision, dreams and angels**
    - **12:7—Angel of the Lord**
    - **Verse 11—then Peter “recovered his senses...”**
  - **The maid named Rhoda—leaves Peter outside**
    - **Irony is this is exactly what they are praying for!**
      - **You are out of your mind!**
      - **It must be his angel (or spirit)**

- Peter checks in, asks them to report this to James and the brothers, and then leaves (where? Rome? Antioch?)
  - Herod's pagan death (Daniel, Esther, Isaiah 40:6-8)

**Revisit Paul and Barnabas**

- Church at Antioch (11:19-26)—Barnabas the “connector”
  - The first time they are called “Christians!”
- Missionary journeys of Barnabas and Paul 11:27-30 and 12: 25

**Closing Points:**

- **Clothed with power—meant for everyone, and sign of God**
- **Remember the outline: you shall be my witnesses--in Jerusalem, in Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth!**
- **We will begin to lean into the perspective of Paul and his missionary journeys that will take him all over the known world, leading eventually to Rome.**
- **Time we are in right now**

**Quiz Answers!**

**For Next Week, Acts 13-16**

**Small Group Questions:**

1. How has reading the Acts of the Apostles been so far for you? What is one aspect of this lesson that has moved you, inspired faith or action?
2. Peter is asked to do something that makes him incredibly uncomfortable in “killing and eating” unclean animals in preparation for his visit to Cornelius. What has God asked you to do that makes you uncomfortable? How have you responded so far?
3. Sharing the faith is usually uncomfortable, what difference does it make knowing that this doesn't come “naturally” even to the apostles, but instead is something difficult that they must choose to do? Does this inspire you to be more open and intentional to evangelizing others?
4. Which character we have learned about so far do you most relate to? Jesus, Peter, Herod, Stephen (boldly witnesses in front of a hostile crowd, forgives his murderers), Ananias (called to go pray over Paul, never heard from again), Philip (runs alongside the Ethiopian Eunuch and evangelizes him), Dorcas (the woman who worked for others who was raised from the dead by Peter), Cornelius (pagan who is called to learn about Jesus and follows through Peter's preaching, along with his whole household), Mary (praying in the midst of the apostles as they all receive the Holy Spirit)? If you don't relate with any, which would you like to be more like?
5. The Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, with perhaps the best of intentions, will consistently be the “opposition party” to what the Holy Spirit is doing in the Church, both in the ministry of Peter and eventually of Paul. Where can I as a Catholic at times become so rigid that I don't allow the Holy Spirit to work? How can I make sure I am not part of the “opposition party” to what God is doing in His Church today?