

## The Expansion of the Church at Jerusalem (Acts 3:1-6:7)

### **Introduction: The Establishment of a Witnessing Church (Acts 1-2)**

- A. Prologue: This is Part 2 of The Story of Jesus' Quest (1:1-2)
- B. Jesus' Post-Resurrection Ministry: the preparation of the witnesses (1:3-5)
- C. The Pre-Launch Sequence: Prerequisites for Mission (1:6-2:41)
  1. Commission: the mandate to witness (1:6-8)
  2. Direction: The ascended Lord (1:9-11)
  3. Agents: A full complement of apostles (1:12-26)
  4. Power: The outpouring of the Holy Spirit (2:1-41)
- D. The Status of the Newly-Formed Church (2:42-47)

*Progress Report #1: "And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (2:47).*

### **Part I: The Expanding Witness to/through the Jewish world [PETER prominent] (3:1-12:24)**

#### **Segment A: The Expansion of the Church at Jerusalem and Judea (3:1-6:7)**

1. The Challenge of *Persecution* – Round 1 (3:1-4:31)
  - a. The Miracle: A Lame Man Healed (3:1-10)
    - 1) The Situation
      - The place: The "Beautiful Gate" at Solomon's Colonnade on the Temple Mount
      - The time: 3 p.m. (hour of prayer), "one day"
      - The man: a 40+-year-old beggar, crippled from birth
      - The apostles: Peter and John
    - 2) The Sequence
    - 3) The Reactions
    - 4) An Implied Question: *How did this happen?*
  - b. The Message: *For healing from "spiritual lameness" repent and turn to God* (10-26)
  - c. The Interruption: Peter and John Arrested (4:1-4)
  - d. The Interrogation: by the Sanhedrin (4:5-22)
    - 1) Question: "By what name have you done this?"
    - 2) Answer: "Jesus Christ of Nazareth – there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."
    - 3) Warning: "Speak no longer to anyone in this name"
    - 4) Response: "We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard. We must obey God rather than men"

- e. The Prayer (4:23-31)
  - 1) Perspective: God is the Sovereign Lord
  - 2) Petition: Consider their threats; give boldness for obedience; give us a hand.
  - 3) Response: The place was shaken; the people were filled with the Holy Spirit; they preached boldly
  
2. The Challenge of *Moral Compromise* (4:32-5:10)
  - a. Barnabas – a positive example of generosity and encouragement (4:32-37)
  - b. Ananias and Sapphira – a negative example of deception and disunity (5:1-11)
  
3. The Challenge of *Persecution* – Round 2 (5:11-42)
  - a. The prayer (of 4:23-31) answered (5:12-16)
  - b. Persecution renewed (5:17-33)
    - Scene 1: The *arrest* of the apostles (17-18)
    - Scene 2: The *rescue* of the apostles (19-21)
    - Scene 3: The *recovery* of the apostles (21-26)
    - Scene 4: The *inquisition* of the apostles (27-33)
    - Scene 5: The *rescue* of the apostles (34-39)
    - Scene 6: The *release* of the apostles (39-40)
  - c. Proclamation continued (5:41-42)
  
4. The Challenge of *Division/Distracted* (6:1-7)
  - a. The Problem (6:1)
    - 1) The issue: A particular group of widows was being overlooked in the daily food distribution
    - 2) The circumstances
      - Numerical expansion
      - Communal care for the needy
      - The existence of two Jewish subgroups within the church: “Hebraic” and “Hellenistic”
    - 3) The expression: a “complaint”
    - 4) The danger: divisiveness
  - b. The Resolution – a proposal from the apostles (6:2-7)
    - 1) Another danger: distraction of apostles from their assigned task.
    - 2) Recommendation: delegation of responsibilities
  - c. The Results: Danger averted and growth multiplied

*Progress Report #2*: “So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith” (6:7).