

Notes on the Greek New Testament Day 157 – June 6th – Acts 4:1-37

Works frequently referenced in these notes on Acts

Bruce, FF, *The Acts of the Apostles*, London, 2nd ed. 1952

Polhill, John B, *Acts: The New American Commentary*, Nashville, 1992

Stott, John R W, *The Message of Acts*, IVP (The Bible Speaks Today), Leicester, 1990

Acts 4:1

Λαλούντων δὲ αὐτῶν πρὸς τὸν λαὸν
ἐπέστησαν αὐτοῖς οἱ ἱερεῖς καὶ ὁ στρατηγὸς
τοῦ ἱεροῦ καὶ οἱ Σαδδουκαῖοι,
ἐφίστημι come up to, approach
ἱερεὺς, εὼς m priest
στρατηγός, ου m chief magistrate; σ. του
ἱεροῦ captain of the temple guard

"This officer ... came next in rank to the High Priest and superintended arrangements for the preservation of order in and around the Temple." Bruce.

Σαδδουκαῖοι "...They claimed to represent the ancient standpoint in religion and morals, and emphasised the priestly point of view. The priestly families belonged for the most part to this party, and as the continued enjoyment of the priestly prerogatives and, indeed, the peace of the land and political existence of the people depended on Roman goodwill, they tried to cooperate as far as possible with the Roman authorities, and set their face sternly against religious or nationalistic aspirations which might incur the wrath of the ruling power. They rejected as innovations belief in the world of spirit-beings ... and in individual immortality or at least resurrection." Bruce.

Verse 2

διαπονόμενοι διὰ τὸ διδάσκειν αὐτοὺς τὸν
λαὸν καὶ καταγγέλλειν ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ τὴν
ἀνάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν,
διαπονεομαι be greatly annoyed

A word found elsewhere in the NT only in 16:18.

διδασκῶ teach
καταγγέλλω proclaim, make known,
preach
ἀναστασις, εὼς f resurrection, raising up
νεκρός, α, ον dead

"The meaning seems to be that they proved from the fact of Jesus' resurrection (ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ, 'in the case of Jesus') the general principle of resurrection, which the Sadducees denied. Cf. Paul's argument in 1 Cor 15:12ff.; also Ac 23:6ff.; 24:15; 26:6ff." Bruce.
"The idea of a general resurrection was an apocalyptic concept with all sorts of messianic overtones. Messianic ideas among the Jews of that day meant revolt, overthrow of the foreign overlords, and restoration of the Davidic kingdom." Polhill.

Verse 3

καὶ ἐπέβαλον αὐτοῖς τὰς χεῖρας καὶ ἔθεντο εἰς
τήρησιν εἰς τὴν αὔριον, ἦν γὰρ ἑσπέρα ἤδη.
ἐπιβαλλῶ lay (hands) on
χεῖρ, χεῖρος f hand
ἔθεντο Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl τιθεῖμι
place, set
τήρησις, εὼς f keeping, custody, prison
αὔριον Adv. tomorrow, the next day
ἑσπερα, ας f evening
ἤδη adv now, already

Verse 4

πολλοὶ δὲ τῶν ἀκουσάντων τὸν λόγον
ἐπίστευσαν, καὶ ἐγενήθη ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν
ἀνδρῶν ὡς χιλιάδες πέντε.
ἐγενήθη Verb, aor indic, 3 s γίνομαι
ἀριθμός, ου m number, total
χιλιάς, αδος f (group of) a thousand
πέντε (indeclinable) five

An increase on the 3,000 of 2:41. The opposition of the authorities could not suppress the power of the gospel message.

Verse 5

Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν αὔριον συναθῆναι αὐτῶν
τοὺς ἄρχοντας καὶ τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους καὶ τοὺς
γραμματεῖς ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ
συναθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin συναγω
gather, gather together
ἄρχων, οντος m ruler, official

Here an alternative to ἀρχιερεῖς.

πρεσβυτερος, α, ον elder, old man/woman

This term was commonly used for members of the Sanhedrin (cf. 22:5; Lk 22:66). It is particularly used of the 'lay' members who, along with ἀρχιερείς and γραμματεῖς made up the Sanhedrin (cf. Mk 14:53 etc.).

πρεσβυτεροι came to be applied to the leaders of the Jerusalem church (cf. 11:30) and later to leaders of Gentile churches (cf. 14:23).

γραμματευς, εως m scribe, expert in Jewish law

"The 'scribes' were the professional students and teachers of the Scriptures, and they belonged mostly to the Pharisaic party." Bruce.

Verse 6

(καὶ Ἄννας ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς καὶ Καϊάφας καὶ Ἰωάννης καὶ Ἀλέξανδρος καὶ ὅσοι ἦσαν ἐκ γένους ἀρχιερατικοῦ),

καὶ is here used for 'including in particular'.

ἀρχιερευς, εως m high priest, member of high priestly family

Καϊαφας son in law to Annas (see Jn 18:13)

Annas was appointed High Priest by Quirinius in AD 6 and held office until AD 15. "Even after his deposition Annas enjoyed great privilege, and by the time we are dealing with he was the senior ex-High Priest... His prestige is reflected in the NT by his being coupled with Caiaphas in Lk 3:2 as High Priest (ἐπι ἀρχιερεως Ἄννα καὶ Καϊαφα), and by our Lord's appearance before him for a private examination before He was led before the Sanhedrin in the palace of Caiaphas."

Caiaphas "was appointed to the High Priesthood by the procurator Valerius Gratus in AD 18, and held it for eighteen years, a longer period than any other High Priest in NT times. The fact that Pilate left him in office during his ten years' procuratorship suggests that the two had an understanding. As High Priest he would be President of the Sanhedrin, though he may have deferred to the seniority of Annas when the latter was present." Bruce. Ἰωαννης could refer to Jonathan, son of Annas, who succeeded Caiaphas in 36 but who was succeeded a year later by his brother Theophilus.

Ἀλεξανδρος is otherwise unknown.

ὅσος, η, ον as much as, as many as, all γενος, ους n family

ἀρχιερατικος, ον high priestly

"After Herod deprived the Hasmonean dynasty of the high priesthood, the High Priests were chosen from a few families, among which the families of Boethus and Annas were pre-eminent" Bruce.

Verse 7

καὶ στήσαντες αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ μέσῳ ἐπυνθάνοντο· Ἐν ποίᾳ δυνάμει ἢ ἐν ποίῳ ὀνόματι ἐποιήσατε τοῦτο ὑμεῖς;

στήσαντες Verb, 2 aor act ptc, m nom pl ἵστημι stand, stop, stand firm

μεσος, η, ον middle

πυνθανομαι inquire, ask, question

ποιος, α, ον what, of what kind

δυνάμει Noun, dat s δυναμις

ἢ οἱ

ὄνομα, τος n name, authority

Cf. the question asked of Jesus in Lk 20:1-2. ὑμεῖς is "Scornfully emphatic, the more so by its position at the end of the sentence: 'people like you'" Bruce.

Verse 8

τότε Πέτρος πλησθεὶς πνεύματος ἁγίου εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς· Ἄρχοντες τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ πρεσβύτεροι,

τοτε then, at that time

πλησθεὶς Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s

πιμπλημι fill

"The permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit in a believer must be contrasted with special moments of inspiration, such as the present, which was a fulfilment of our Lord's promise in Mk 13:11 and parallel passages." Bruce.

λαος, ου m people, a people

Many MSS include the words του Ἰσραηλ after πρεσβυτεροι. Metzger suggests an addition in the interest of symmetry.

Verse 9

εἰ ἡμεῖς σήμερον ἀνακρινόμεθα ἐπὶ εὐεργεσίᾳ ἀνθρώπου ἀσθενοῦς, ἐν τίνι οὗτος σέσωσται,

σημερον today

ἀνακρινω examine, question, judge

εὐεργεσια, ας f service, act of kindness

ἀσθενης, ες sick, weak, helpless

ἐν τίνι here = 'by what means'

σέσωσται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s σωζω

save, heal

σωζω is used both of physical healing and of spiritual salvation. Here the intent is primarily physical, though there is a shift of emphasis in v.12.

Verse 10

γνωστὸν ἔστω πᾶσιν ὑμῖν καὶ παντὶ τῷ λαῷ Ἰσραὴλ ὅτι ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου, ὃν ὑμεῖς ἐσταυρώσατε, ὃν ὁ θεὸς ἤγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν, ἐν τούτῳ οὗτος παρέστηκεν ἐνώπιον ὑμῶν ὑγιής.

γνωστος, η, ον known

ἔστω Verb, pres act imperat, 3s εἰμι

γνωστον ἔστω see 1:19.

σταυροῦ crucify

Cf. 2:36.

ἐγείρω raise

νεκρός, α, ον dead

Stott comments, "This is the third time that Peter has used the graphic formula 'you killed him, but God raised him' (2:23-24; 3:15)."

παρέστηκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3s
παριστήμι and παριστάνω bring into
one's presence; perf = stand, be
present, stand before

ἐνώπιον prep with gen before, in front of
ὑγιής, ες sound, healthy, well, cured

Verse 11

οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ λίθος ὁ ἐξουθενηθεὶς ὑφ' ὁμῶν
τῶν οἰκοδόμων, ὁ γενόμενος εἰς κεφαλὴν
γωνίας.

λίθος, ου m stone, precious stone

ἐξουθενηθεὶς Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s

ἐξουθενεῖω despise, treat with contempt

οἰκοδομος, ου m builder

γενόμενος Verb, aor ptc, m nom s γίνομαι

κεφαλή, ης f head

γωνία, ας f corner; κεφαλή γωνίας main
corner stone, keystone

The quotation is from Ps 118:22 (LXX 117)
and is quoted by Jesus in Mk 12:10 (and
parallels). See also 1 Peter 2:7.

Verse 12

καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἄλλῳ οὐδενὶ ἢ σωτηρία, οὐδὲ
γὰρ ὄνομα ἔστιν ἕτερον ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν τὸ
δεδομένον ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἐν ᾧ δεῖ σωθῆναι
ἡμᾶς.

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other

οὐδεις, οὐδεμα, οὐδεν no one, nothing

σωτηρία, ας f salvation

ὄνομα, τος n name

ἕτερος, α, ον other, different

"Implies a difference in kind, which is not
involved in ἄλλος" J.B.Lightfoot on Gal 1:6.

δεδομένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n
nom/acc s δίδωμι

δεῖ impersonal verb it is necessary, should
σωθῆναι aor pass infin σωζω

Verse 13

Θεωροῦντες δὲ τὴν τοῦ Πέτρου παρρησίαν καὶ
Ἰωάννου καὶ καταλαβόμενοι ὅτι ἄνθρωποι
ἀγράμματοί εἰσιν καὶ ἰδιῶται, ἐθαύμαζον,
ἐπεγίνωσκόν τε αὐτοὺς ὅτι σὺν τῷ Ἰησοῦ
ἦσαν,

θεωρεῖω see, watch, observe, notice
παρρησία, ας f openness, boldness

καταλαβόμενοι Verb, aor midd ptc, m nom pl
καταλαμβάνω midd. realise, understand
ἀγράμματος, ον uneducated

The meaning here would seem to be 'lacking
formal rabbinic training', cf. Jn 7:15.

ἰδιωτής, ου m untrained, unskilled man

θαύμαζω wonder, be amazed

ἐπιγίνωσκω perceive, recognise

τε enclitic particle and, and so

They knew this beforehand, but Peter's manner
of speech brought this fact particularly back to
mind as Peter reminded them of Jesus who had
taught with authority and not as the scribes.

Verse 14

τόν τε ἄνθρωπον βλέποντες σὺν αὐτοῖς ἐστῶτα
τόν τεθεραπευμένον οὐδὲν εἶχον ἀντειπεῖν.

ἐστῶτα Verb, perf act ptc, n nom/acc pl

ἵστημι pf stand

τεθεραπευμένον pf pass ptc θεραπεύω heal

ἀντειπεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἀντιλεγω

object to, oppose

"The irony can scarcely be missed – the
accused spoke with utter boldness and
freedom; their accusers sat in stony silence."
Polhill.

Verse 15

κελεύσαντες δὲ αὐτοὺς ἔξω τοῦ συνεδρίου
ἀπελθεῖν συνέβαλλον πρὸς ἀλλήλους

κελεύω order, command

ἔξω out, outside, away

συνεδριον, ου n Sanhedrin (the highest
Jewish council in religious and civil
matters)

συμβαλλω think about, consider

ἀλλήλων, ος, ους reciprocal pronoun one
another

Verse 16

λέγοντες· Τί ποιήσωμεν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις
τούτοις; ὅτι μὲν γὰρ γνωστὸν σημεῖον γέγονεν
δι' αὐτῶν πᾶσιν τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν Ἰερουσαλήμ
φανερὸν, καὶ οὐ δυνάμεθα ἀρνεῖσθαι·

γνωστός, η, ον known, notable

γέγονεν Verb, perf act indic, 3s γίνομαι

κατοικεῖω live, settle, inhabit

φανερὸς, α, ον known, evident, plain

ἀρνεῖσθαι Verb, aor midd dep infin ἀρνεομαι
deny

Verse 17

ἀλλ' ἵνα μὴ ἐπὶ πλεῖον διανεμηθῇ εἰς τὸν λαόν,
ἀπειλησώμεθα αὐτοῖς μηκέτι λαλεῖν ἐπὶ τῷ
ὀνόματι τούτῳ μηδενὶ ἀνθρώπων.

πλεῖων, πλεῖον οἱ πλεον more; ἐπὶ π.

further, more and more

διανεμηθῆ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s διανεμω
spread

λαος, ου m see v.8

ἀπειλησωμεθα Verb, aor midd subj, 1 pl
ἀπειλω threaten, warn

μηκετι no longer

ὄνομα, τος n see v.12

μηδεις, μηδεμια, μηδεν no one, nothing

Verse 18

καὶ καλέσαντες αὐτοὺς παρήγγειλαν τὸ
καθόλου μὴ φθέγγεσθαι μηδὲ διδάσκειν ἐπὶ τῷ
ὀνόματι τοῦ Ἰησοῦ.

καλεω call

παραγγελλω command, instruct

καθόλου adv completely, altogether; κ. μη
under no circumstances

φθεγγομαι speak

μηδε negative particle nor

διδασκω teach

The present infinitives imply that they should not *carry on* speaking and teaching – they should stop doing something which they had been doing.

Verse 19

ὁ δὲ Πέτρος καὶ Ἰωάννης ἀποκριθέντες εἶπον
πρὸς αὐτούς· Εἰ δίκαιόν ἐστιν ἐνώπιον τοῦ
θεοῦ ὑμῶν ἀκούειν μᾶλλον ἢ τοῦ θεοῦ,
κρίνατε,

ἀποκριθέντες Verb, aor pass dep ptc, m nom
pl ἀποκρινομαι reply, say

εἶπον Verb, aor act indic, 1s & 3pl λεγω

δικαιος, α, ον righteous, just

ἐνώπιον before, in front of

μᾶλλον more, rather

ἢ or, than

κρινω judge

Verse 20

οὐ δύναμεθα γὰρ ἡμεῖς ἃ εἶδαμεν καὶ
ἠκούσαμεν μὴ λαλεῖν.

οὐ δυναμεθα ... μη λαλειν 'we cannot give up
speaking'

εἶδαμεν Verb, aor act indic, 1 pl ὄραω see,
observe

They refer to themselves as *witnesses* of all that has happened, particularly Jesus' resurrection.

Verse 21

οἱ δὲ προσαπειλησάμενοι ἀπέλυσαν αὐτούς,
μηδὲν εὐρίσκοντες τὸ πῶς κολάσονται αὐτούς,
διὰ τὸν λαόν, ὅτι πάντες ἐδόξαζον τὸν θεὸν ἐπὶ
τῷ γεγονότι·

προσαπειλησάμενοι Verb, aor midd dep ptc,
m nom pl προσαπειλομαι threaten
further

Here alone in the NT.

ἀπολυω release, set free, dismiss

κολάσονται Verb, aor midd subj κολαζω
act & midd punish

μηδεν εὐρίσκοντες το πως κολασονται αὐτους
'Not being able to find any way in which to
punish them'.

δοξαζω praise, honour, glorify, exalt

γεγονότι Verb, perf act ptc, m/n dat s γινομαι

Verse 22

ἐτῶν γὰρ ἦν πλειόνων τεσσεράκοντα ὁ
ἄνθρωπος ἐφ' ὃν γέγρονει τὸ σημεῖον τοῦτο τῆς
ἰάσεως.

ἐτος, ους n year

πλειων, πλειον ογ πλεον more

τεσσερακοντα forty

γέγρονει Verb, perf act indic, 3 s γινομαι

ἰασις, εως f healing

It would seem impossible that someone who had been lame so long should now be able to walk. It was an evident miracle and sign.

Verse 23

Ἀπολυθέντες δὲ ἦλθον πρὸς τοὺς ἰδίους καὶ
ἀπήγγειλαν ὅσα πρὸς αὐτοὺς οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ
οἱ πρεσβύτεροι εἶπαν.

ἀπολυω release, set free

ἦλθον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3 pl ἐρχομαι

ἴδιος, α, ον one's own

Cf. 24:23; Jn 1:11; 13:1.

ἀπήγγειλαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl

ἀπαγγελλω announce, proclaim

ὅσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as,
how much; neut pl all

ἀρχιερευς, εως m high priest, member of
high priestly family

πρεσβυτερος, α, ον elder, old man/woman

Verse 24

οἱ δὲ ἀκούσαντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἦσαν φωνὴν
πρὸς τὸν θεὸν καὶ εἶπαν· Δέσποτα, σὺ ὁ
ποιήσας τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν
θάλασσαν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς,

ὁμοθυμαδον adv with one mind, by
common consent, together

See 1:14. "Here is the Christian *koinonia* in action." Stott.

αἰρῶ raise

δεσποτης, ου m Lord, Master (of God and of Christ)

For the use of this term of God and of Christ, see Lk 2:29; Rev 6:10; 2 Tim 2:21; 2 Peter 2:1; Jude 4. It emphasises absolute right, rule and power.

θαλασσα, ης f sea

For the form of this prayer, compare Hezekiah's prayer in Isa 37:16-20.

Verse 25

ὁ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου στόματος Δαυὶδ παιδὸς σου εἰπὼν· Ἰνατί ἐφρῶξαν ἔθνη καὶ λαοὶ ἐμελέτησαν κενά;

στομα, τος n mouth, testimony
παις, παιδος m & f servant, slave, child
εἰπων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s λεγω

The Greek here is obscure (Westcott and Hort suggest it contains a primitive error). There are several textual variants which seem to be attempts to 'correct' the text. It is perhaps best to understand the genitive του πατρος as belonging with στοματος Δαυειδ and having an instrumental sense. This would produce the sense expressed by the NIV, "You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father, David..."

ἰνατι why? for what reason?

φρασσω rage, be furious

ἔθνη Noun, nom & acc pl ἔθνος, ους n nation, people; τα ἔθνη Gentiles

λαος, ου m people, a people

μελετω practice, plot, think about

κενος, η, ον empty, to no purpose, senseless

The quotation is from Psalm 2:1. This psalm is interpreted of Christ in 13:33 and in Heb 1:5; 5:5; Rev 2:27; 12:5; 19:15.

Verse 26

παρέστησαν οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς καὶ οἱ ἄρχοντες συνήχθησαν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ κατὰ τοῦ κυρίου καὶ κατὰ τοῦ χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ.

παριστημι and παριστηνω stand before, stand together

βασιλευς, εως m king

ἄρχων, οντος m ruler, official, authority, judge

συνήχθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl

συναγω gather, assemble

ἐπι το αὐτο together

Verse 27

συνήχθησαν γὰρ ἐπ' ἀληθείας ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ ἐπὶ τὸν ἅγιον παῖδά σου Ἰησοῦν, ὃν ἔχρισας, Ἡρώδης τε καὶ Πόντιος Πιλάτος σὺν ἔθνεσιν καὶ λαοῖς Ἰσραήλ,

ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality; ἐπ ἀληθειας 'of a truth', truly

πολις, εως f city, town

παις, παιδος see v.25

χρω anoint

"Referring to Χριστου, v 26... The reference is probably to his baptism, when he was publicly manifested to Israel and addressed as the Son of God." Bruce.

τε enclitic particle and; τε και and also

Verse 28

ποιῆσαι ὅσα ἡ χεὶρ σου καὶ ἡ βουλή προώρισεν γενέσθαι.

ὅσος, η, ον see v.23.

χειρ, χειρος f hand, power

βουλη, ης f purpose, intention, plan
προοριζω decide from the beginning, decide beforehand, predestine

Cf. 2:23; 3:18.

Verse 29

καὶ τὰ νῦν, κύριε, ἔπιθε ἐπὶ τὰς ἀπειλάς αὐτῶν καὶ δὸς τοῖς δούλοις σου μετὰ παρρησίας πάσης λαλεῖν τὸν λόγον σου,

τα νυν but now, and now

ἐπιθε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s ἐφοραω take notice of, concern oneself with

In NT only here and in Lk 1:25.

Stott comments, "It was not a prayer that their threats would fall under divine judgment, nor even that they would remain unfulfilled, so that the church would be preserved in peace and safety, but only that God would consider them, would bear them in his mind."

ἀπειλη, ης f threat, threatening

δὸς Verse, aor act imperat, 2 s διδωμι

παρρησια, ας f see v.13

Verse 30

ἐν τῷ τὴν χεῖρά σου ἐκτείνειν σε εἰς ἴασιν καὶ σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα γίνεσθαι διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ ἁγίου παιδὸς σου Ἰησοῦ.

ἐν τῷ with infinitive used of instrument

χειρ, χειρος see v.28

ἐκτεινω stretch out, extend

ἰασις, εως f healing

τερας, ατος n wonder, object of wonder

Verse 31

καὶ δεηθέντων αὐτῶν ἐσαλεύθη ὁ τόπος ἐν ᾧ ἦσαν συνηγμένοι, καὶ ἐπλήσθησαν ἅπαντες τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, καὶ ἐλάλουν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ μετὰ παρρησίας.

δεηθέντων Verb, aor pass dep ptc, gen pl

δεομαι ask, pray

σαλευω shake, disturb

τοπος, ου m place

συνηγμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl

συναγω gather, gather together

ἐπλήσθησαν Verb, aor pas indic, 3 pl

πιμπλημι fill

ἅπας, ασα, αν (alternative form of πας) all, whole

"Their prayer was fulfilled at once.

Immediately they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word with boldness, just as they had petitioned. This was not a 'second Pentecost'. They had already received the Spirit. The Spirit had helped Peter and John in a mighty way before the Sanhedrin. It was a fresh filling, a renewed awareness of the Spirit's power and presence in their life and witness. This was not an ephemeral ecstatic manifestation but a fresh endowment of power for witness that would continue (cf. 4:33)." Polhill.

Verses 32-37

Stott comments, "Just as after the first coming of the Spirit [Luke] describes the characteristics of the Spirit-filled community (2:42-47), so after they are again filled with the Spirit he provides a second description (4:32-37). Moreover in both cases his emphasis is the same. *All the believers*, he begins, in 4:32 as in 2:44, formed a closely knit group. They 'were together' (2:44), as they devoted themselves to 'the fellowship' (2:42), and they *were one in heart and mind* (4:32). This was the fundamental solidarity of love which the believers enjoyed, and their economic sharing was but one expression of the union of their hearts and minds."

Verse 32

Τοῦ δὲ πλήθους τῶν πιστευσάντων ἦν καρδία καὶ ψυχή μία, καὶ οὐδὲ εἰς τι τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐτῶ ἐλεγεν ἴδιον εἶναι, ἀλλ' ἦν αὐτοῖς πάντα κοινά.

Cf. 2:43,44.

πληθος, ους n crowd, multitude

Here meaning 'congregation'.

πιστεω believe (in), have faith (in)

καρδια, ας f heart

ψυχη, ης f self, life, 'soul'

εἰς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one, single

οὐδε neither

ὑπαρχω be at one's disposal (τα ὑ. possessions).

ἴδιος, α, ον one's own

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι

κοινος, α, ον common, in common

Verse 33

καὶ δυνάμει μεγάλη ἀπεδίδουν τὸ μαρτύριον οἱ ἀπόστολοι τῆς ἀναστάσεως τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, χάρις τε μεγάλη ἦν ἐπὶ πάντας αὐτούς.

δυνάμει Noun, dat s δυναμις

μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great

ἀποδιδωμι give, render

μαρτυριον, ου n testimony, witness

ἀναστασις, εως f resurrection, raising up

"Thus they ignored the Sanhedrin's ban, and their witness was characterised by both boldness and power." Stott.

χαρις, ιτος f grace

"An expression which may describe their 'wonderful spirit of generosity' (JBP), or refer to the fact that they were 'held in high esteem' (NEB), or be a more general statement that God's grace was sustaining them." Stott.

Verse 34

οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐνδεής τις ἦν ἐν αὐτοῖς· ὅσοι γὰρ κτήτορες χωρίων ἢ οἰκιῶν ὑπῆρχον, πωλοῦντες ἔφερον τὰς τιμὰς τῶν πιπρασκομένων

ἐνδεης, ες needy, poor

Compare Dt 15:4. The commonwealth promised to Israel under the Old Covenant found expression among these first Christians.

ὅσος, η, ον as much as; pl. as many as, all

κτητωρ, ορος m owner, possessor

χωριον, ου n piece of land, field, place

ἢ ορ

οικια, ας f house, home, household

ὑπηρχον see v.32

πωλεω sell, barter

φερω bring, carry, bear

Suggests habit – ongoing action as necessity arose.

τιμη, ης f price

πιπρασκω sell

Verse 35

καὶ ἐτίθουν παρὰ τοὺς πόδας τῶν ἀποστόλων· διεδίδετο δὲ ἐκάστῳ καθότι ἂν τις χρεῖαν εἶχεν.

ἐτίθουν Verb, imperf act indic, 1 s & 3 pl

τιθημι place, set

πόδας Noun, acc pl πους, ποδος m foot

διεδίδετο Verb, imperf pass indic, 3 s

διαδιδωμι distribute, divide

ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every
καθοτι because, for, as, insofar as
ἀν particle indicating contingency
χρεία, ας f need, want
εἶχεν Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s ἐχῶ

Postscript

Stott writes, "In seeking to evaluate the so-called 'Jerusalem experiment', we shall be wise to avoid extreme positions. We have no liberty to dismiss it as a rash and foolish mistake, motivated by the false expectation of an imminent Parousia and causing the poverty which Paul had later to remedy by his collection from the Greek churches. Luke gives no hint of these things. Nor can we say, however, that the Jerusalem church, being filled with the Spirit, laid down an obligatory model – a kind of primitive Christian 'communism' – which God wants all Spirit-filled communities to copy. The fact that the selling and giving were voluntary is enough to dispose of this. What we should surely do, instead, is to note and seek to imitate the care of the needy and the sacrificial generosity which the Holy Spirit created."

4:36-5:11

The description of the community of goods is now followed by two examples of the way it worked out in practice, in the one happily, in the other disastrously.

Verse 36

Ἰωσήφ δὲ ὁ ἐπικληθεὶς Βαρναβᾶς ἀπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων, ὃ ἐστὶν μεθερμηνεούμενον υἱὸς παρακλήσεως, Λευίτης, Κύπριος τῷ γένει,

ἐπικληθεὶς Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s
ἐπικαλεῶ call, name, surname
μεθερμηνεῶ translate
παρακλησις, εως f encouragement, help, counsel

The idiom υἱὸς παρακλήσεως is Semitic and identifies a key characteristic of a person: see Lk 5:34; 10:6; 16:8; 20:34,36.

"He was the encourager, the advocate, the *paraclete* par excellence of all the characters in Acts. When the Christians in Jerusalem shied away from Paul after his conversion, Barnabas interceded and introduced him to them (9:26f.). When Paul refused to take Mark on his second missionary journey, Barnabas took up for Mark (15:36-39). When the Christians of Jerusalem became concerned over the orthodoxy of the Antiochene Christians in their witness to Greeks, Barnabas again served as intercessor, saw the gracious work of the Antiochene Christians, and encouraged them (11:20-23). Indeed, 11:24 well sums up the portrait of this 'Son of Encouragement': 'He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.'" Polhill.

Λευίτης Levite

"Despite the provisions of Num 18:24 and Dt 10:9, priests and Levites do not seem in practice to have been debarred from owning landed estates." Bruce.

γένος, ος n family

τῷ γένει "Dative of reference, 'by family'." Bruce.

Verse 37

ὑπάρχοντος αὐτῷ ἀγροῦ πωλήσας ἤνεγκεν τὸ χρῆμα καὶ ἔθηκεν παρὰ τοὺς πόδας τῶν ἀποστόλων.

ἀγρος, ου m field, farm, countryside
ἤνεγκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s φέρω
χρημα, τος n mostly pl possessions, wealth, money