

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 162 – June 11th – Acts 7:51-8:13

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

Verse 51

Σκληροτράχηλοι καὶ ἀπερίτμητοι καρδίαις καὶ τοῖς ὤσιν, ὑμεῖς αἰεὶ τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ ἀντιπίπτετε, ὡς οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν καὶ ὑμεῖς.

"This sudden invective may have been occasioned by an angry outburst against what he just said. It was clear that he was attacking some of their most cherished beliefs about the Temple." Bruce.

Stott comments, "The false witnesses had accused Stephen of two blasphemies, namely of 'speaking against this holy place and against the law' (6:13)... We have followed his arguments in relation to the temple; now in relation to the law he turns the table on his judges. It is not he, he maintains, who has shown a disregard for the law, but they, like their fathers before them. The accused assumes the role of the accuser."

σκληροτράχηλος, ον stubborn, hardened (stiff-necked)

Cf. Ex 33:5.

ἀπερίτμητος, ον stubborn (lit uncircumcised)

Cf. Lev 26:41; Dt 10:16; Jer 4:4; 9:26; Ezek 44:7.

ὄς, ὄτος n ear, hearing

αἰεὶ always, constantly

ἅγιος, α, ον holy, consecrated

ἀντιπιπῶ resist, fight against

Cf. Is. 43:10.

Verse 52

τίνα τῶν προφητῶν οὐκ ἐδίωξαν οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν; καὶ ἀπέκτειναν τοὺς προκαταγγέιλαντας περὶ τῆς ἐλεύσεως τοῦ δικαίου οὗ νῦν ὑμεῖς προδότες καὶ φονεῖς ἐγένεσθε,

Cf. Mt 23:29-37.

διώκω persecute, seek after, pursue, follow

ἀποκτείνω and ἀποκτενω, -ννω kill, put to death

προκαταγγελλῶ announce beforehand
ἐλευσις, εως f coming

προδοτής, ου m traitor, betrayer,
trecherous person
φονεὺς, εως m murderer

Verse 53

οἵτινες ἐλάβετε τὸν νόμον εἰς διαταγὰς ἀγγέλων, καὶ οὐκ ἐφυλάξατε.

οἵτινες Pronoun, m nom pl ὅστις, ἥτις, ὅτι
who, which, whoever, whichever

ἐλάβετε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl λαμβανῶ
διαταγή, ης f decree, ordinance

Cf. Gal 3:19; Heb 2:2.

φυλασσῶ keep

Verse 54

Ἀκούοντες δὲ ταῦτα διεπρίοντο ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν καὶ ἔβρυχον τοὺς ὀδόντας ἐπ' αὐτόν.

διεπρίοντο Verb, imperf pass indic, 3 pl

διαπριομαι be furious or enraged

βρυχῶ grind, gnash

ὄδους, ὀδοντος m tooth

Cf. Ps 35:16.

Verse 55

ὑπάρχων δὲ πλήρης πνεύματος ἁγίου ἀτενίσας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν εἶδεν δόξαν θεοῦ καὶ Ἰησοῦν ἐστῶτα ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ,

ὑπαρχῶ be (equivalent to εἰμι)

πληρής, ες (sometimes not declined) full

Cf. 6:5.

ἀτενίζω fix eyes on, look intently at

εἶδεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ὄραω trans see
ἐστῶτα Verb, perf act ptc, n nom/acc pl

ἵστημι and ἵστανω stand

δεξιός, α, ον right, δεξία right hand

Polhill suggests that the standing position of Christ may portray him in his role as judge (cf. Dan 7:13,14). Others suggest that he had stood up either to act as Stephen's advocate or to welcome the first martyr. Bruce comments, "Stephen had been confessing Christ before men, now he sees Christ confessing his servant before God."

Verse 56

καὶ εἶπεν· Ἴδου θεωρῶ τοὺς οὐρανούς
δηνοιγμένους καὶ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ
δεξιῶν ἐστῶτα τοῦ θεοῦ.

θεωρεῶ see, watch, observe

δηνοιγμένους Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc pl
διανοίγω open

Cf. Mat 26:64; Mk 14:62; Lk 22:69.

Verse 57

κράζαντες δὲ φωνῇ μεγάλῃ συνέσχον τὰ ὦτα
αὐτῶν, καὶ ὄρμησαν ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐπ' αὐτόν,

κραζῶ cry out, call out

μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great

συνέσχον Verb, aor act indic, 1 s & 3 pl
συνεχω surround, stop up (of ears)

οὐς, ὠτος n see v.51.

ὄρμαω rush

ὁμοθυμαδον adv with one mind, by
common consent, together

"It is difficult to decide whether we are to understand Stephen's execution as an instance of lynch-law or as an excess of jurisdiction on the part of the Sanhedrin." Bruce.

Verse 58

καὶ ἐκβαλόντες ἔξω τῆς πόλεως ἐλιθοβόλουν.
καὶ οἱ μάρτυρες ἀπέθεντο τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν
παρὰ τοὺς πόδας νεανίου καλουμένου Σαύλου.

ἔξω out, outside

πολις, εως f city, town

λιθοβολεω stone, throw stones at
μαρτυς, μαρτυρος dat pl μαρτυσιν m
witness

They played a key role in the execution, cf.
24:14; Dt 17:7.

ἀπέθεντο Verb, aor midd indic, 3 pl

ἀποτιθημι throw off, take off (clothes)

ἱματιον, ου n garment, robe, cloak

πόδας Noun, acc pl πους, ποδος m foot
νεανιας, ου m young man

Verse 59

καὶ ἐλιθοβόλουν τὸν Στέφανον ἐπικαλούμενον
καὶ λέγοντα· Κύριε Ἰησοῦ, δέξαι τὸ πνεῦμά
μου·

ἐπικαλεω call; midd call upon, appeal to
δέξαι Verb, aor midd dep imperat, 2 s

δεχομαι receive

Cf. Lk 23:46. Bruce comments, "That the request made by our Lord to the Father should so soon be repeated to himself by Stephen is evidence of the early date of the belief in the essential deity of Christ."

Verse 60

θεὸς δὲ τὰ γόνατα ἔκραξεν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ·
Κύριε, μὴ στήσης αὐτοῖς ταύτην τὴν ἁμαρτίαν·
καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἐκοιμήθη.

θεὸς Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s τιθημι place
γονυ, γονατος n knee; τιθημι τα γόνατα
kneel

στήσης Verb, aor act subj, 2 s ἵστημι and
ἵστανω set, place

ἁμαρτια, ας f sin

Cf. Lk 23:34.

ἐκοιμήθη Verb, aor pass dep indic, 3 s
κοιμαομαι sleep, fall asleep, die

"An unexpectedly beautiful word for so brutal a death." Bruce.

Verse 1a

Σαῦλος δὲ ἦν συνευδοκῶν τῇ ἀναιρέσει αὐτοῦ.
συνευδοκεω approve of, be willing, agree
to

Does not necessarily imply that Saul was a member of the Sanhedrin, though he may have been.

ἀναιρεσις, εως f killing, murder

Stott comments, "Stephen's martyrdom supplemented the influence of his teaching. Not only did it deeply impress Saul of Tarsus [cf. 22:20], and contribute to his conversion which led to his becoming the apostle to the Gentiles, but it also occasioned 'a great persecution' which led to the scattering of the disciples 'throughout Judea and Samaria' (8:1b).

"The church was shocked, even stunned, by the martyrdom of Stephen and by the violent opposition that followed. But, with the benefit of hindsight, we can see how God's providence used Stephen's testimony, in word and deed, through life and death, to promote the church's mission."

Verse 1b

Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ διωγμὸς μέγας
ἐπὶ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τὴν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις·
πάντες δὲ διεσπάρησαν κατὰ τὰς χώρας τῆς
Ἰουδαίας καὶ Σαμαρείας πλὴν τῶν ἀποστόλων.

διωγμος, ου m persecution

"The persecution was no doubt instituted by the priestly party; the believers had enjoyed popular favour hitherto (2:47; 5:13), but such revolutionary teaching as Stephen's gave their opponents an opportunity of stirring up the people against them. After Stephen's activity the movement could easily be represented as hostile to the Temple prerogatives, which were protected by the law of the Empire, the safeguarding of which belonged to the High Priest." Bruce.

διεσπάρησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl
διασπειρω scatter

"The new Ecclesia, like the old, was to have its Diaspora (cf. 1 Peter 1:1 [Jas 1:1])." Bruce. Stott adds that just as the Jewish diaspora had led to the propagation of Judaism, so this Christian diaspora led to the propagation of the gospel.

Polhill remarks that the primary sense of the word is to scatter seed and that this scattering also resulted in growth and harvest.

κατα distributive use of κατα - κατα τας χωρας... across the regions of ...

πλην prep with gen. except, but, besides

The apostles probably believed it their duty to remain at their post in Jerusalem. Polhill suggests that the opposition was chiefly against Stephen's fellow Hellenists. "The apostles and their fellow Aramaic-speaking Christians had not taken such a radical stance but had remained faithful to the Jewish institutions; thus they were likely able to remain in Jerusalem unmolested."

Verse 2

συνεκόμισαν δὲ τὸν Στέφανον ἄνδρες εὐλαβεῖς καὶ ἐποίησαν κοπετὸν μέγαν ἐπ' αὐτῷ.

συγκομιζω bury
εὐλαβης, ες devout, reverent
κοπετος, ου m weeping, mourning

Verse 3

Σαῦλος δὲ ἐλυμαίνετο τὴν ἐκκλησίαν κατὰ τοὺς οἴκους εἰσπορευόμενος, σύρων τε ἄνδρας καὶ γυναῖκας παρεδίδου εἰς φυλακὴν.

λυμαιομαι harass, destroy

Here alone in the NT. The word is used of a wild beast tearing at flesh.

κατα τους οικους εισπορευομενος 'going into one house after another'. Possibly breaking into 'house-church' assemblies.

συρω drag, drag away, sweep down
παρεδίδου Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s
παραδιδωμι hand over, deliver up
φυλακη, ης f prison, imprisonment

"So much did he embody the persecution in his own person that the church is described as experiencing 'peace' upon his conversion (9:31)." Polhill.

Verse 4

Οἱ μὲν οὖν διασπαρέντες διήλθον εὐαγγελιζόμενοι τὸν λόγον.

διήλθον aor διερχομαι pass through, go over, go through, go

Stott comments, "Up to this point it was the apostles who had given the lead in evangelism, in defiance of the Sanhedrin's ban, violence and threats; now, however, as the apostles stayed in Jerusalem, it was the generality of believers who took up the evangelistic task. Not that they all became 'preachers' or 'missionaries' as a full-time vocation. The statement that they 'preached the word' is misleading; the Greek expression does not necessarily mean more than 'shared the good news'. Philip was soon to preach to the Samaritan crowds (6); it is better to think of the other refugees as lay witnesses ('nameless amateur missionaries' [Green]).

"What is plain is that the devil (who lurks behind all persecution of the church) overreached himself. His attack had the opposite effect of what he intended. Instead of smothering the gospel, persecution succeeded only in spreading it."

Verse 5

Φίλιππος δὲ κατελθὼν εἰς τὴν πόλιν τῆς Σαμαρείας ἐκήρυσσεν αὐτοῖς τὸν χριστόν.

Stott comments on the link between this chapter and the preceding, "Luke seems to have regarded Stephen and Philip as a pair. Both men belonged to the Seven, and so had social responsibilities in the Jerusalem church (6:5). Yet both were also preaching evangelists (6:10; 8:5), and both performed public signs and wonders (6:8; 8:6). In addition, Luke saw the ministry of both men as helping to pave the way for the Gentile mission. Stephen's contribution lay in his teaching about the temple, the law and the Christ, and in the effects of his martyrdom, while Philip's lay in his bold evangelisation of the Samaritans and of an Ethiopian leader. For the Jews regarded the Samaritans as heretical outsiders and Ethiopia as 'the extreme boundary of the habitable world in the hot south'. [Hengel]"

κατερχομαι come down, go down

The city may have been Shechem.

κηρυσσω preach, proclaim

The imperfect suggests ongoing practice.

Stott comments, "It is hard for us to conceive the boldness of the step Philip took in preaching the gospel to Samaritans. For the hostility between Jews and Samaritans had lasted a thousand years. It began with the break-up of the monarchy in the tenth century BC when ten tribes defected, making Samaria their capital, and only two tribes remained loyal to Jerusalem. It became steadily worse when Samaria was captured in 722 BC, thousands of its inhabitants were deported, and the country was re-populated by foreigners. In the sixth century BC, when the Jews returned to their land, they refused the help of the Samaritans in the rebuilding of the temple. Not till the fourth century BC, however, did the Samaritan schism harden, with the building of their rival temple on Mount Gerizim and their repudiation of the Old Testament Scripture except the Pentateuch. The Samaritans were despised by the Jews as hybrids in both race and religion, as both heretics and schismatics. John summed up the situation in his simple statement that 'Jews do not associate with Samaritans' [Jn 4:9]. Jesus' sympathy for them, however, is already apparent in Luke's Gospel [e.g. Lk 9:52-56; 10:30-37; 17:11-19]. Now in Acts 8 Luke is obviously excited about the evangelisation of the Samaritans and their incorporation in the Messianic community."

Verse 6

προσεῖχον δὲ οἱ ὄχλοι τοῖς λεγομένοις ὑπὸ τοῦ Φιλίππου ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐν τῷ ἀκούειν αὐτοῦς καὶ βλέπειν τὰ σημεῖα ἃ ἐποίει·

προσειχον Verb, imperf act indic, 1 s & 3 pl
προσεχω pay close attention to
ὁμοθυμαδον adv see 7:57
βλεπω see, look

'Signs' were not confined to the apostles, cf. 6:8.

Verse 7

πολλοὶ γὰρ τῶν ἐχόντων πνεύματα ἀκάθαρτα βοῶντα φωνῇ μεγάλη ἐξήρχοντο, πολλοὶ δὲ παραλελυμένοι καὶ χωλοὶ ἐθεραπεύθησαν·

ἀκαθαρτος, ον unclean
βοαω call, cry out, shout

Cf. Mk 1:26 and many similar Gospel passages.

παραλελυμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl
παραλυομαι be paralyzed
χωλος, η, ον lame, crippled
θεραπευω heal

Verse 8

ἐγένετο δὲ πολλὴ χαρὰ ἐν τῇ πόλει ἐκείνῃ.

χαρα, ας f joy

"The gospel is the great equaliser. In the gospel there are no 'half-breeds,' no physical rejects, no place for any human prejudice. There is acceptance for all, joy for all, 'great joy for all the people' (Luke 2:10)." Polhill.

Verse 9

Ἀνὴρ δὲ τις ὀνόματι Σίμων προὔπηρχεν ἐν τῇ πόλει μαγεύων καὶ ἐξιστάνων τὸ ἔθνος τῆς Σαμαρείας, λέγων εἶναί τινα ἑαυτὸν μέγαν,

προὔπαρχω be or exist previously
μαγευω practice magic

"The μαγοι were originally a Median caste, a pre-Zoroastrian priestly class (Herodotus 1.101,140), but the word is used in an extended sense of practitioners of various kinds of sorcery and even quackery. The μαγοι of Mt 2:1ff. were probably astrologers." Bruce.

ἐξιστάνων Verb, pres act ptc, m nom s
ἐξιστημι amaze, astonish; intrans be amazed

Verse 10

ὃ προσεῖχον πάντες ἀπὸ μικροῦ ἕως μεγάλου λέγοντες· Οὗτός ἐστιν ἡ Δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ καλουμένη Μεγάλη.

προσειχον see v.6

There are various views of what claims Simon may have made and whom he claimed to serve. Bruce, having listed several says, "It is plain at least that Simon was acclaimed as the one in whom the power of the supreme God resided."

Verse 11

προσεῖχον δὲ αὐτῷ διὰ τὸ ἰκανῶ χρόνῳ ταῖς μαγείαις ἐξεστακέσαι αὐτούς.

ικανος, η, ον sufficient, large, great; δια το ἰκανῶ χρονῶ for a long time
μαγεια, ας f magic, magic arts
ἐξεστακέσαι Verb, perf act infin ἐξιστημι

Verse 12

ὅτε δὲ ἐπίστευσαν τῷ Φιλίππῳ εὐαγγελιζομένῳ περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ὀνόματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἐβαπτίζοντο ἄνδρες τε καὶ γυναῖκες.

Verse 13

ὁ δὲ Σίμων καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπίστευσεν, καὶ βαπτισθεὶς ἦν προσκαρτερῶν τῷ Φιλίππῳ, θεωρῶν τε σημεῖα καὶ δυνάμεις μεγάλας γινομένας ἐξίστατο.

The nature of Simon's faith is a matter of dispute. It is clear however that he made a profession of faith which appeared to be genuine.

προσκαρτερω devote oneself to, keep
close company with

θεωρω see, watch, observe, notice

"He who had amazed others was himself now
amazed." Stott.