

# ACTS 2:42

*THEY DEVOTED THEMSELVES TO THE APOSTLES' TEACHING AND TO FELLOWSHIP, TO THE BREAKING OF BREAD AND TO PRAYER.*



## Day 1 Word of God Acts 5:12 – 26 The Apostles Heal Many

12 The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon’s Colonnade. 13 No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. 14 Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. 15 As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter’s shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. 16 Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by impure spirits, and all of them were healed.

## Word of God Day 1 (continued)

### The Apostles Persecuted

17 Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. 18 They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. 19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. 20 “Go, stand in the temple courts,” he said, “and tell the people all about this new life.”

21 At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people.

When the high priest and his associates arrived, they called together the Sanhedrin—the full assembly of the elders of Israel—and sent to the jail for the apostles. 22 But on arriving at the jail, the officers did not find them there. So they went back and reported, 23 “We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside.” 24 On hearing this report, the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were at a loss, wondering what this might lead to.

25 Then someone came and said, “Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people.” 26 At that, the captain went with his officers and brought the apostles. They did not use force, because they feared that the people would stone them.

## Day 1 Discussion

Look back over these verses. There is so much going on!

But what I want us to focus on today is verse 17:

*17 Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy.*

Imagine the religious leaders' frustration! Shouldn't this movement be over? After years of putting up with Jesus they'd finally gotten rid of Him. Shouldn't that be it?

All the religious leaders knew about Jesus was “head knowledge.” They knew Jesus lived, they knew He did miracles, and they knew they had killed Him. They thought that was the end of the story. They didn't count on the fact, however, that everything Jesus said and did came from the Father. They didn't consider that Jesus would send his Holy Spirit. They didn't believe that really knowing and believing all that Jesus had said would transform this group of men called apostles. They didn't anticipate that the Holy Spirit of God would change the world, and their world, forever. No, their response to the apostles' popularity was to be filled with jealousy because people were seeking to find truth from a source other than them.

It is not enough to know about Jesus. It isn't even enough to know a lot about Him. We can have all the head knowledge in the world, but if we don't have that up close and personal contact with Jesus, it is only head knowledge. We need to believe in who He really is and all He has done for us. We need to tell Him how much we love Him and thank Him for saving the lost, saving each of us who believe and live in relationship with Him.

Do you know Jesus... or know about Jesus?

## Day 2 Read Acts 5:27-40

27 The apostles were brought in and made to appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. 28 “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,” he said. “Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man’s blood.”

29 Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than human beings! 30 The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. 31 God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. 32 We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”

33 When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death. 34 But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while. 35 Then he addressed the Sanhedrin: “Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. 36 Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. 37 After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered. 38 Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. 39 But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God.”

40 His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

## DAY 3

### Word of God Isaiah 53:1-12

Who has believed our message  
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

2  
He grew up before him like a tender shoot,  
and like a root out of dry ground.  
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,  
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

3  
He was despised and rejected by mankind,  
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.  
Like one from whom people hide their faces  
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

4  
Surely he took up our pain  
and bore our suffering,  
yet we considered him punished by God,  
stricken by him, and afflicted.

5  
But he was pierced for our transgressions,  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,  
and by his wounds we are healed.



## Day 3 Word of God (continued)

6  
 We all, like sheep, have gone astray,  
 each of us has turned to our own way;  
 and the Lord has laid on him  
 the iniquity of us all.

7  
 He was oppressed and afflicted,  
 yet he did not open his mouth;  
 he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,  
 and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,  
 so he did not open his mouth.

8  
 By oppression and judgment he was taken away.  
 Yet who of his generation protested?  
 For he was cut off from the land of the living;  
 for the transgression of my people he was punished.

9  
 He was assigned a grave with the wicked,  
 and with the rich in his death,  
 though he had done no violence,  
 nor was any deceit in his mouth.

10  
 Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,  
 and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin,  
 he will see his offspring and prolong his days,  
 and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.

11  
 After he has suffered,  
 he will see the light of life and be satisfied;  
 by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many,  
 and he will bear their iniquities.

12  
 Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,  
 and he will divide the spoils with the strong,  
 because he poured out his life unto death,  
 and was numbered with the transgressors.  
 For he bore the sin of many,  
 and made intercession for the transgressors.

## Day 3 Discussion

### Timeless Words

Isaiah lived from approximately 740 BC to 681 BC. In Isaiah's lifetime, Israel would be taken into captivity in Babylon after hundreds of years of warnings about their godless decisions. The Israelites reading Isaiah's words would have understood that a living thing would have to be sacrificed in their place to pay for their sins. This had been a part of their religion since the Passover; a lamb without spot or blemish would be sacrificed for their sins. They would have seen these verses as proof that God would one day redeem them from their captivity and restore the greatness of Israel. It must have confused and surprised the people to think of their salvation coming from such a strange deliverer. Not by a warrior, or by an army, or by a sacrificial lamb, but by exchanging one sinless life for all sinful lives. Who would this humble, sinless servant be?

## Day 3 Discussion (continued)

Though the Jews of that time saw this description as a promise that they would be restored, believers have recognized these powerful words as a description of our Lord and Savior since Jesus' resurrection. He was the one who "bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, and on Him God laid all our sin." This is a salvation that depends on the humble self-sacrifice of our Lord, not on our goodness or earthly power. It requires us to also come humbly to the One who gave it all for us.

Do you recognize your Savior in the words of Isaiah?  
Have you talked with your Savior about this awesome sacrifice?

## Day 4 Read Acts 8:4-8

4 Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. 5 Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. 6 When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. 7 For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. 8 So there was great joy in that city.

## DAY 5

### Word of God Acts 8:26-40

<sup>26</sup> Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza". <sup>27</sup> So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means "queen of the Ethiopians"). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, <sup>28</sup> and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. <sup>29</sup> The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it.

<sup>30</sup> Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked.

<sup>31</sup> "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

<sup>32</sup> This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading:

"He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,  
and as a lamb before its shearer is silent,  
so he did not open his mouth.

<sup>33</sup> In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.

Who can speak of his descendants?  
For his life was taken from the earth."

<sup>34</sup> The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" <sup>35</sup> Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus

<sup>36</sup> As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?" <sup>37</sup> <sup>38</sup> And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. <sup>39</sup> When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. <sup>40</sup> Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and

traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

## Day 5 Discussion

### A Close Encounter

As was often the case with men who served queens in certain parts of the world, the man in the chariot was a eunuch. He was a man who had been physically altered in order to serve the queen. As a royal treasurer to a queen he would have controlled great wealth, which is apparent from the chariot, personal scroll of Isaiah, and a servant driving the chariot.

Despite his position of authority, Jews did not allow eunuchs to enter the full traditions of the Jewish faith. That didn't stop his desire to worship the true God, however. And that desire led him to worship at the holy temple in Jerusalem. It's on the eunuch's journey home that the Holy Spirit arranges an amazing encounter.

Reread Philip's response to the Holy Spirit. He doesn't hesitate, he takes off down that long, hot, southern road with nothing in front of him but sun and sand. When he sees the chariot in the distance the Holy Spirit directs Philip to go to it and stay near it, and Philip does exactly that. The instructions seem to end there, and I wonder if Philip was stressed out thinking, "Now what?" If he was, it is not recorded. Instead, we see Philip do something so natural. He begins right where the eunuch is. Being led by the Holy Spirit to a chariot in the middle of the desert was enough direction for Philip, because he knew the story. He could easily tie the events written 700 years before to the story of Jesus' life.

## Application

Doesn't it make you wonder how many times the Holy Spirit has provided an encounter for us?

Do we become stressed and overcome with fear at saying the wrong thing or wondering what to say?

**Start with their question and lead them to Jesus' great love. You can't go wrong with that plan.**

