

Just the facts – a verse by verse word study

Exploring Greek – Understanding key Greek words

INDIVIDUAL EXAMPLES OF CHRISTIAN CONDUCT 4:36–5:1

5:1

Ananias is the Greek form of either *Ananyāh* (Neh 3:23), meaning “Yahweh has shown himself(?),” or *Hānanyāh* (1 Chr 25:4), meaning “Yahweh has shown favor” (in the birth of the child so named). His wife’s name is the Greek transcription of *Šappîrāh*, “Beautiful One,” a substantivized Aramaic fem. adjective. Her name is not found in the OT, but the Aramaic adj. is used in Dan 4:9, 18, and the name is attested on first-century Jerusalem ossuaries¹

5:2

Kept - *nosphizein*, “misappropriate, put aside for oneself, purloin” the same verb that occurs in the Achan story in Josh 7:1 (LXX).² The verb is often employed in extrabiblical Greek texts for sequestering part of a large sum belonging to a community³

5:3

Lied – “falsified the Holy Spirit”

Satan – key in early part of Jesus life so important in early part of the Church

Filled – *eplērōsen* could be blinded

5:4

At your own disposal – note there is no accusation that ownership of property is wrong

Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart – What gave you such an idea?

5:5

Fear – *phobos* Basic idea “to flee” Terror.

¹ Fitzmyer, J. A. (2008). [*The Acts of the Apostles: a new translation with introduction and commentary*](#) (Vol. 31, p. 322). Yale University Press.

² Fitzmyer, J. A. (2008). [*The Acts of the Apostles: a new translation with introduction and commentary*](#) (Vol. 31, p. 322). Yale University Press.

³ Fitzmyer, J. A. (2008). [*The Acts of the Apostles: a new translation with introduction and commentary*](#) (Vol. 31, p. 322). Yale University Press.



5:9

Test the Lord - The “testing” of God has an OT background in Exod 17:2; Num 20:13, 24 (Israel’s rebellious tempting of God in the desert); Ps 106:32. Luke uses the same verb (*peirazein*) as is used of Israel in Deut 33:8 (LXX). *Kyrios* refers to Yahweh, whose Spirit has been put to the test. See NOTE on 1:24; cf. Luke 4:18; Acts 8:39.⁴

5:11

Fear – *phobos*

Church - For the first time in Acts one meets *ekklēsia*, “church,” as the designation of the Christian community in Jerusalem; Luke is using the standard term current in his day, as he reflects on this incident and records with hindsight the community’s reaction to it. *Ekklēsia* now begins to appear regularly in Acts, especially after 8:1b. See 8:3; 9:31; 11:22, 26; 12:1, 5; 13:1; 14:23, 27; 15:3, 4, 22, 41; 16:5; 18:22; 19:32, 39, 40; 20:17, 28. It is not found in the Lucan Gospel. Three things are significant in the Lucan use of *ekklēsia*: (1) The emergence of the term in a context that mentions Saul (Paul), whose use of it in his writings did much to popularize it. (2) It is not necessarily the oldest or most primitive title for the community (see NOTES on 2:42; 9:2), despite what one might be tempted to conclude from Matt 16:18; 18:17, the only two places where the word is found in the gospel tradition. (3) The frequency with which it designates a local or particular Christian community; in time, even in narratives of Acts, it begins to assume the connotation of the universal church transcending local boundaries.

A different sense of *ekklēsia* is found in 7:38, “congregation assembly,” reflecting its OT usage. In the LXX it designates the Hebrews wandering in the desert (e.g. Deut 4:10; 9:10; 18:16; 31:30), or the assembly of returned exiles (Ezra 10:8), or the cultic assembly of Israel (2 Chr 6:3). There it often translates Hebrew *qāhāl*, which is found occasionally also in Qumran writings for the Essene community (e.g., 1QM 4:10 [*qəhal ’ēl*]; 1QSa 1:25; 2:4; CD 7:17; 11:22; 12:6). This usage shows its aptness for describing a group of persons holding the same religious convictions⁵ *ekklesia* (ἐκκλησία, 1577), from *ek*, “out of,” and *klesis*, “a calling” (*kaleo*, “to call”), was used among the Greeks of a body of citizens “gathered” to discuss the affairs of state, Acts 19:39. In the Sept. it is used to designate the “gathering” of Israel, summoned for any definite purpose, or a “gathering” regarded as representative of the whole nation. In Acts 7:38 it is used of Israel; in 19:32, 41, of a riotous mob. It has two applications to companies of Christians, (a) to the whole company of the redeemed throughout the present era, the company of which Christ said, “I will build My Church,” Matt. 16:18, and which is further described as “the Church which is His Body,” Eph. 1:22; 5:23, (b) in the singular number (e.g., Matt. 18:17, RV marg., “congregation”), to a company consisting of professed believers, e.g., Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:13; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:5, and in the plural, with reference to churches in a district.

There is an apparent exception in the RV of Acts 9:31, where, while the KJV has “churches,” the singular seems to point to a district; but the reference is clearly to the church as it was in Jerusalem, from which it had

⁴ Fitzmyer, J. A. (2008). [*The Acts of the Apostles: a new translation with introduction and commentary*](#) (Vol. 31, p. 324). Yale University Press.

⁵ Fitzmyer, J. A. (2008). [*The Acts of the Apostles: a new translation with introduction and commentary*](#) (Vol. 31, p. 325). Yale University Press.



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From Vines Dictionary:

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It might be noted that this is the first time the word “church” (*ekklēsia*) occurs in Acts, which denotes the people of God gathered as a religious community.⁸ Perhaps it is not by accident that it occurs in the context of this story. The church can only thrive as the people of God if it lives within the total trust of all its members. Where there is that unity of trust, that oneness of heart and mind, the church flourishes in the power of the Spirit. Where there is duplicity and distrust, its witness fails.⁹

THIRD MAJOR SUMMARY: A CARING COMMUNITY 5:12–16

5:12

All – apostles. Note that now all the apostles participate in the miraculous

5:13

Not of the rest - a spatial distance from the Christians in Solomon’s Colonnade is meant¹⁰ There is now fear of joining this group because of the report of two dying?

5:14

Now women mentioned as converting

⁶ Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, W., Jr. (1996). In [Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words](#) (Vol. 2, pp. 42–43). T. Nelson.

⁷ Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, W., Jr. (1996). In [Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words](#) (Vol. 2, pp. 42–43). T. Nelson.

⁸ Polhill, J. B. (1992). [Acts](#) (Vol. 26, p. 160). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

⁹ Polhill, J. B. (1992). [Acts](#) (Vol. 26, p. 160). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

¹⁰ Fitzmyer, J. A. (2008). [The Acts of the Apostles: a new translation with introduction and commentary](#) (Vol. 31, p. 328). Yale University Press.



5:15

Shadow - In the ancient world a person's shadow was the subject of much superstition and was believed to represent his or her power and personality, to literally be an extension of their person. Whether or not they were healed by Peter's shadow Luke did not explicitly say, but the note underlines the strength of the apostle's healing reputation.¹¹

5:16

The need for healing overrides the fear of the severity of the fate of *Ananias* and Sapphira.

FURTHER PERSECUTION OF THE APOSTLES - 5:17–42

5:17

Jealousy - *zelos* (ζήλος, 2205), "zeal, jealousy," is rendered "fierceness" in Heb. 10:27, (of fire).¹²

They imprisoned the apostles – not just Peter and John

5:18

Prison - teresis (τήρησις, 5084), translated "hold" in Acts 4:3, κιν, "prison"¹³

5:19

Angel of the Lord

5:20

Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life - Nothing can stop what the Lord wants to do

Life – *zoe*

5:21

All the senate of the people – perhaps a different group than the Sanhedrin?

Prison – different word than 5:18. *desmoterion* (δεσμωτήριον, 1201), "a place of bonds" (from *desmos*, "a bond," *deo*, "to bind"), "a prison"¹⁴

5:27

Stood up – usual procedure with dependents standing and judges sitting.

Note that now it is not just Peter and John but all the apostles are brought before the Sanhedrin.

¹¹ Polhill, J. B. (1992). [Acts](#) (Vol. 26, p. 164). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

¹² Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, W., Jr. (1996). In [Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words](#) (Vol. 2, p. 234). T. Nelson.

¹³ Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, W., Jr. (1996). In [Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words](#) (Vol. 2, p. 306). T. Nelson.

¹⁴ Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, W., Jr. (1996). In [Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words](#) (Vol. 2, p. 488). T. Nelson.



5:28

Lay blood - To “lay someone’s blood” on someone is an Old Testament expression for a charge of murder and in accordance with the *ius Talionis* demanded the death of the guilty party¹⁵

No question about how they escaped!

5:30

Hanging on a tree – Deuteronomy 21:22-23

5:31

Leader - *archegos* - “Prince” in Acts 3:15 (marg., “Author”) and 5:31, but “Author” in Heb. 2:10, RV, “Captain,” RV marg., and KJV, and “Author” in 12:2, primarily signifies “one who takes a lead in, or provides the first occasion of, anything.” In the Sept. it is used of the chief of a tribe or family, Num. 13:2 (RV, prince); of the “heads” of the children of Israel, v. 3; a captain of the whole people, 14:4; in Micah 1:13, of Lachish as the leader of the sin of the daughter of Zion: there, as in Heb. 2:10, the word suggests a combination of the meaning of leader with that of the source from whence a thing proceeds. That Christ is the Prince of life signifies, as Chrysostom says, that “the life He had was not from another; the Prince or Author of life must be He who has life from Himself.” But the word does not necessarily combine the idea of the source or originating cause with that of leader. In Heb. 12:2 where Christ is called the “Author and Perfecter of faith,” He is represented as the one who takes precedence in faith and is thus the perfect exemplar of it. The pronoun “our” does not correspond to anything in the original, and may well be omitted. Christ in the days of His flesh trod undeviatingly the path of faith, and as the Perfecter has brought it to a perfect end in His own person. Thus He is the leader of all others who tread that path.

Savior - *sōtēr*, “savior.” The latter, already used in Luke 2:11, appears now for the first time in Acts; see 13:23. The title has been used of Yahweh in Luke 1:47, as often in the OT, translating Hebrew *mōšīāʿ* (1 Sam 10:19; Isa 45:15, 21). It denotes one who delivers from evil, physical, psychic, national, cataclysmic, or moral (see further *Luke*, 204–5). Here it would connote the last-named nuance: a deliverer from moral evil (sin), as the next clause makes clear.¹⁶

5:32

so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him – the Spirit of God bears witness

5:33

Enraged - *diaprio* (διαπρίω, 1282) signifies “to saw asunder” (*dia*, “asunder,” *prio*, “to saw”), “to divide by a saw” (as in 1 Chron. 20:3, Sept.), hence, metaphorically, “to be sawn through mentally, to be rent with vexation, to be cut to the heart,” is used in Acts 5:33; 7:54. Note the increase in the emotional response of the Sanhedrin.

¹⁵ Polhill, J. B. (1992). *Acts* (Vol. 26, p. 169). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

¹⁶ Fitzmyer, J. A. (2008). *The Acts of the Apostles: a new translation with introduction and commentary* (Vol. 31, p. 338). Yale University Press.



One wonders how much of a part politics played in the Sanhedrin's decision on this particular occasion. Josephus said that the Sadducean officials usually yielded to the recommendations of the Pharisees because the latter enjoyed the support of the masses¹⁷

5:34

Pharisee - The Pharisees were nonpriestly interpreters of the Torah in postexilic Judea; they first emerged as an organized group in the Maccabean period, perhaps shortly before the time of John Hyrcanus (*Ant.* 13.5.9 §171). They were staunch defenders of observance of the Mosaic law, ancestral customs, and the resurrection of the dead (Acts 23:8; cf. Josephus, *J.W.* 2.8.14 §§162–63; *Ag.Ap.* 2.30 §218; *Ant.* 18.1.3 §14). They also maintained that all was governed by fate (i.e., predestination), even while affirming human responsibility for conduct. They enjoyed great influence among the ordinary people. The name *Pharisaios* is a grecized form of Aramaic *Pērišāyê*, “separated ones,” probably used of them by others who differed with them in interpretation.¹⁸

Gamaliel – See Acts 22:3 as the Jewish teacher at whose feet Paul sat to learn Torah. He was the grandson of Hillel and was the grandfather of R. Gamaliel.

5:36

Theudas - mentioned by Josephus (*Ant.* 20.5.1 §§97–98): An impostor named Theudas persuaded a considerable crowd of people to take along their belongings and follow him to the Jordan River, for he said that he was a prophet and that, having parted the river-waters with a command, he would provide them easy passage. With such talk, he duped many. Fadus [C. Cuspius Fadus, the procurator of Judea, A.D. 44–46], however, did not let them profit from their folly; he sent against them a squadron of cavalry, which fell on them unexpectedly, killed many of them, and took many captive. Theudas himself they captured alive, cut off his head, and brought it to Jerusalem.¹⁹

5:37

Judas the Galilean - This incident is also mentioned by Josephus, who, having finished his account about the procuratorship of Fadus, tells of his successor, Tiberius Julius Alexander (A.D. 46–48). Alexander ordered the crucifixion of James and Simon, the sons of “Judas the Galilean” (using the same phrase that Luke does). Josephus identifies the latter thus: “While Quirinius was taking the census of Judea, he [Judas the Galilean] drew the people into revolt against the Romans” (*Ant.* 20.5.2 §102). This agrees with the date that Luke assigns to Judas, “at the time of the census.” Josephus also speaks of Judas in the time of the prefect Coponius: “a Galilean named Judas incited a revolt of his countrymen, upbraiding them for paying tribute to the Romans ...” (*J.W.* 2.8.1 §118)²⁰ Judas also had a group of followers.

¹⁷ Polhill, J. B. (1992). [Acts](#) (Vol. 26, p. 170). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

¹⁸ Fitzmyer, J. A. (2008). [The Acts of the Apostles: a new translation with introduction and commentary](#) (Vol. 31, pp. 338–339). Yale University Press.

¹⁹ Fitzmyer, J. A. (2008). [The Acts of the Apostles: a new translation with introduction and commentary](#) (Vol. 31, pp. 339–340). Yale University Press.

²⁰ Fitzmyer, J. A. (2008). [The Acts of the Apostles: a new translation with introduction and commentary](#) (Vol. 31, p. 340). Yale University Press.



5:39

But if it is of God - “The prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name, which I have not ordered him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. If you say in your heart, ‘How shall we know the word that the Lord has not spoken?’—When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has uttered it presumptuously; you need not be afraid of him” (Deut 18:20–22)²¹

5:40

They beat them – even after taking Gamaliel’s advice Flogging is mentioned as a punishment in Deut 22:18 for a man who has defamed a woman as not a virgin.²² The flogging referred to was the customary punishment used as a warning not to persist in an offense. It consisted of thirty-nine lashes, often referred to as the forty less one (cf. 2 Cor 11:24). Based on the provision for forty stripes given in Deut 25:3, the practice had developed of only giving thirty-nine in the event of miscounting, preferring to err on the side of clemency rather than severity. It was still a cruel punishment. With bared chest and in a kneeling position, one was beaten with a tripled strap of calf hide across both chest and back, two on the back for each stripe across the chest. Men were known to have died from the ordeal.²³

5:41

Rejoicing - Joy is not just inward. It has a cause and finds expression. It thus aims at sharing, especially as festal joy. It is a disposition of the whole man²⁴

Searching heavenly places – what is happening in the heavenly places (dimensions)

Discernment

5:3

Word of knowledge

Evil

Satan – mighty one and Lucifer-son of God

Angel

Angel of the Lord – see notes

²¹ Fitzmyer, J. A. (2008). [*The Acts of the Apostles: a new translation with introduction and commentary*](#) (Vol. 31, p. 341). Yale University Press.

²² Fitzmyer, J. A. (2008). [*The Acts of the Apostles: a new translation with introduction and commentary*](#) (Vol. 31, p. 341). Yale University Press.

²³ Polhill, J. B. (1992). [*Acts*](#) (Vol. 26, p. 174). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

²⁴ Conzelmann, H., & Zimmerli, W. (1964–). [χαίρω, χαρά, συγχαίρω, χάρις, χαρίζομαι, χαριτόω, ἀχάριστος, χάρισμα, εὐχαριστέω, εὐχαριστία, εὐχάριστος](#). In G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, & G. Friedrich (Eds.), *Theological dictionary of the New Testament* (electronic ed., Vol. 9, p. 363). Eerdmans.



5:11
Fear (Rob)

Understanding Undercurrents – theological and biblical concepts tied to other books in the Bible

5:1-11

Eternal Security - Calvinists vs. Arminian

Calvinism and Arminianism are two theological systems that differ in their views on eternal security and how people are saved:

Calvinists believe that once a person accepts Christ, they are eternally saved and cannot lose their salvation. This is called the "once saved, always saved" doctrine, or the Perseverance of the Saints. Calvinists believe that God's grace is irresistible, and that he will ensure that believers persevere in their faith.

Armenians believe that believers can lose their salvation through free will, by turning away from God or falling from grace after coming to faith. This is called conditional salvation. Armenians believe that God works to preserve his people, but he does not always prevent those who were born again from falling away.

5:5

Discipline vs Punishment – see notes

Fear of the Lord – See notes

5:16

Demonization of Christians – Is it possible? See Notes

Specifying personal application

1. Do we understand that we cannot hide what we do from the Lord? If we do not repent, then the Lord will reveal it to his prophets.
2. Our lives cannot be lives of duplicity. We cannot have one foot in the service of the Lord and one foot in the world. Choose this day who you will serve.
3. Do we rejoice when we are persecuted?
4. Do we have faith to believe that the Lord can work signs, wonders, miracles and healings through us?
5. As a believer, have you ever been jealous of others who accomplish much in the name of the Lord?
6. Notice that when the Angel of the Lord rescued the apostles they were freed, but they still had to do their part. We cannot expect the Lord to do everything for us.

