A HARMONY OF THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS — CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

The Acts of the Apostles, Chapters 1–9: The Continuation of Luke's Gospel and the Birth of the Church

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Preface: The Synoptic Continuation

The three Synoptic Gospels — Matthew, Mark, and Luke — end at the resurrection and the Great Commission. But Luke alone does not end there. Luke is the author of two volumes: his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, both addressed to the same Theophilus (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1), both written as a continuous historical narrative. Acts 1:1 explicitly describes the Gospel as "the former treatise" and Acts as its continuation. The Gospel ends with the disciples returning to Jerusalem with great joy; Acts begins with the risen Jesus appearing to them over forty days and then ascending into heaven.

Chapter twenty-two of this harmony covers Acts 1–9 — the foundational events of the earliest church: the Ascension, the filling of the Spirit at Pentecost, the first preaching of Peter, the common life of the Jerusalem community, the first persecution and martyrdom of Stephen, the mission to Samaria, and the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. These events are the direct fulfillment of the Great Commission with which the Synoptic Gospels closed — the gospel beginning at Jerusalem and moving outward toward the ends of the earth.

Matthew and Mark contribute nothing directly to Acts — Acts is Luke's narrative alone. But the Synoptic tradition is present throughout: the Jerusalem community's life echoes the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount; Peter's preaching consistently cites the Synoptic events of Jesus's ministry, death, and resurrection; and the missionary pattern of Acts fulfills the Mission Discourses of Matthew 10 and Luke 10.

Each section is identified by its source: **[Acts]** throughout, with cross-references to the Synoptic Gospel sections where the continuity is directly evident.

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Part Twenty-One: From Jerusalem to the Ends of the Earth

Section 232 — The Ascension and the Promise [Acts 1:1–11]

The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which he was received up, after that he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom he had chosen: to whom he also showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God.

And being assembled together with them, he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye heard from me: for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence.

They therefore, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?

And he said unto them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority. But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

And while they were looking stedfastly into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven.

Section 233 — Matthias Chosen; The Upper Room [Acts 1:12–26]

Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is nigh unto Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey off.

And when they were come in, they went up into the upper chamber, where they were abiding; both Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James.

These all with one accord continued stedfastly in prayer, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

And in these days Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren, and said (and there was a multitude of persons gathered together, about a hundred and twenty), Brethren, it was needful that the scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spake before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus.

And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show of these two the one

whom thou hast chosen, to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas fell away, that he might go to his own place.

And they gave lots for them; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Section 234 — Pentecost: The Coming of the Holy Spirit [Acts 2:1–13]

And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speaking in his own language.

And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying, Behold, are not all these that speak Galilaeans? And how hear we, every man in our own language wherein we were born?

And they were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying one to another, What meaneth this? But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine.

Section 235 — Peter's Pentecost Sermon [Acts 2:14–41]

But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spake forth unto them, saying, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and give ear unto my words.

For these are not drunken, as ye suppose; seeing it is but the third hour of the day; but this is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel:

And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh: And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And your young men shall see visions, And your old men shall dream dreams.

Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear.

Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified.

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?

And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls.

Section 236 — The Life of the Jerusalem Community [Acts 2:42–47]

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need.

And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people.

And the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved.

Section 237 — The Healing at the Beautiful Gate [Acts 3:1–26]

Now Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a certain man that was lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the door of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple.

And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them.

But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.

And he took him by the right hand, and raised him up: and immediately his feet and his ankle-bones received strength. And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk; and he entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

And all the people saw him walking and praising God: and they took knowledge of him, that it was he that sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

And Peter, seeing it, answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this man? or why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk?

The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Servant Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied before the face of Pilate, when he had determined to release him.

But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of life; whom God raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

And his name, by faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye behold and know: yea, the faith which is through him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

Section 238 — Before the Sanhedrin; They Could Not Deny It [Acts 4:1–31]

And as they spake unto the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being sore troubled because they taught the people, and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

And they laid hands on them, and put them in ward unto the morrow: for it was now eventide.

But many of them that heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem.

And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, By what power, or in what name, have ye done this?

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders, be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even in him doth this man stand here before you whole.

He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner.

And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.

Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

But seeing the man that was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people; for all men glorified God for that which was done.

And they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said unto them. And when they heard it, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou that didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: and now, Lord, look upon their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness, while thou stretchest forth thy hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of thy holy Servant Jesus.

And when they had prayed, the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

Section 239 — Ananias and Sapphira [Acts 5:1–11]

But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power? How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

And Ananias hearing these words fell down and gave up the ghost: and great fear came upon all that heard it.

And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much. And she said, Yea, for so much.

But Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to try the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them that have buried thy husband are at the door, and they shall carry thee out.

And she fell down immediately at his feet, and gave up the ghost.

And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things.

Section 240 — The Stoning of Stephen [Acts 6:1–7:60]

And in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

And Stephen, full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people.

But there arose certain of them that were of the synagogue called the synagogue of the Libertines, and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen; and they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake.

Then they suborned men, who said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.

And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and came upon him, and seized him, and brought him into the council.

But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

But they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.

And they stoned Stephen, calling upon the Lord, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Section 241 — The Scattering and Philip in Samaria [Acts 8:1–25]

And Saul was consenting unto his death.

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

And devout men buried Stephen, and made great lamentation over him.

But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison.

They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word.

And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ. And the multitudes gave heed with one accord unto the things that were spoken by Philip, when they heard, and saw the signs which he did. For from many of those that had unclean spirits, they came out, crying with a loud voice: and many that were palsied, and that were lame, were healed. And there was much joy in that city.

Now when the apostles that were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

Section 242 — Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch [Acts 8:26–40]

But an angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the same is desert. And he arose and went.

And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Jerusalem to worship; and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah.

And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

And Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

And he said, How can I, except some one shall guide me? And he besought Philip to come up and sit with him.

Now the passage of the scripture which he was reading was this:

He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before his shearer is dumb, So he openeth not his mouth.

And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other?

And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus.

And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing.

Section 243 — The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus [Acts 9:1–19]

But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven: and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: but rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but beholding no man.

And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing; and they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink.

Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and the Lord said unto him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.

And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one named Saul, a man of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth; and he hath seen a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands on him, that he might receive his sight.

But Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how much evil he did to thy saints at Jerusalem.

And the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel.

And Ananias departed, and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized.

Section 244 — Peter in Lydda and Joppa; Cornelius Awaits [Acts 9:32–43]

And it came to pass, as Peter went throughout all parts, he came down also to the saints that dwelt at Lydda.

And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had kept his bed eight years; for he was palsied. And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise, and make thy bed. And straightway he arose.

Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.

And it came to pass in those days, that she fell sick, and died: and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper chamber.

Now as Lydda was nigh unto Joppa, the disciples hearing that Peter was there, sent two men unto him, entreating him, Delay not to come on unto us.

And Peter arose and went with them. And when he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.

But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning to the body, he said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and raised her up.

And it became known throughout all Joppa: and many believed on the Lord.

Appendix: Notes on Chapter Twenty-Two

On Acts as the Continuation of Luke

Acts is not a separate book accidentally attached to Luke's Gospel; it is the second volume of a two-part historical work designed as a unity. The structural parallels between Luke and Acts are extensive and deliberate. Luke's Gospel begins in Jerusalem with Zechariah in the Temple; Acts ends in Rome with Paul preaching boldly without hindrance. The Spirit who comes upon Mary at the Annunciation (Luke 1:35) comes upon the entire community at Pentecost (Acts 2). Jesus's programmatic sermon at Nazareth (Luke 4:18–19, citing Isaiah 61) — *"to preach good tidings to the poor… to set at liberty them that are bruised"* — is fulfilled in the community's life described in Acts 2:42–47 and 4:32–35. The Great Commission's geographical outline — Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8) — serves as the structural skeleton of the entire book of Acts.

On Pentecost

The feast of Pentecost (Section 234) — *Shavuot* in Hebrew, the Feast of Weeks, occurring fifty days after Passover — was in Second Temple Judaism associated with the giving of the Law at Sinai. The descent of the Spirit at Pentecost is Luke's presentation of the new covenant counterpart to Sinai: where God gave the Law written on stone tablets, now he writes his law on human hearts through the Spirit (Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 36:26–27). The sound of rushing wind recalls the divine breath of Ezekiel 37 (the valley of dry bones coming to life); the tongues of fire recall the divine fire at Sinai (Exodus 19:18). The reversal of Babel (Genesis 11) — where language was divided and peoples scattered — is enacted in the miracle of speaking in every language simultaneously.

The three thousand baptized at Peter's sermon (Section 235) is the fulfillment of the harvest imagery Jesus used in Luke 10:2 (Section 121 of this harmony): *"The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few."* The laborers who prayed for harvest have now entered it.

On the Jerusalem Community

The description of the Jerusalem community's common life (Section 236) — *"they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers"* — is the most compressed portrait of early Christian community life in the New Testament. The four elements (teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayers) are not a formal liturgical program but a description of a community organized around the resurrected Lord's continuing presence. The selling of possessions and distribution according to need (2:44–45) echoes the Sermon on the Mount's teaching on treasure and the parable of the Rich Fool — the community is practicing, collectively, what Jesus taught individually.

On Peter's Sermon and Christology

Peter's Pentecost sermon (Section 235) is the first formal Christian proclamation in history and establishes the pattern that all subsequent apostolic preaching in Acts will follow: Jesus of Nazareth was attested by signs and wonders; he was crucified by lawless men according to God's determinate plan; God raised him from the dead; he is now exalted to the right hand of God and has poured out the Spirit; therefore repent and be baptized. The conclusion — *"God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified"* — is the first explicit post-resurrection proclamation of Jesus's lordship. The claim combines Psalm 110:1 (Lord) and Psalm 2:2 (Christ/Anointed) — the same two texts Jesus had woven together in his unanswerable question to the Pharisees in Matthew 22:41–46 (Section 150 of this harmony).

On Stephen's Martyrdom

Stephen's death (Section 240) is the first martyrdom in the life of the church and mirrors the death of Jesus in deliberate detail: the false witnesses (as at Jesus's trial before the Sanhedrin), the charge of blasphemy, the vision of the Son of Man (echoing Jesus's own words to the Sanhedrin in Matthew 26:64), and the dying prayer — *"Lord, lay not this sin to their charge"* — which directly echoes Jesus's prayer from the cross: *"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"* (Luke 23:34, Section 178 of this harmony). Stephen dies as Jesus died — the first in what will become a long line of those who follow their Lord not merely in teaching and healing but in the manner of their death.

The young man Saul at whose feet the witnesses laid their garments — introduced here as a minor detail — will become the central figure of the second half of Acts and the most important individual in the history of the early church.

On Philip and the Ethiopian

The encounter of Philip with the Ethiopian eunuch (Section 242) is among the most theologically significant episodes in Acts. The eunuch is reading Isaiah 53 — the Servant Song — and cannot understand of whom the prophet speaks. Philip, beginning from this scripture, *"preached unto him Jesus."* This is the interpretive key to the entire Isaian Servant tradition as the early church read it: the Servant who was led as a lamb to the slaughter, who opened not his mouth, who was taken in his humiliation — is Jesus. The eunuch's immediate response — *"Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?"* — and his baptism in the road represent the first recorded Gentile (or near-Gentile, since he was a worshipper at Jerusalem) conversion in Acts. The gospel is already moving beyond the boundaries of Israel.

On the Conversion of Saul

The conversion of Saul on the Damascus road (Section 243) is narrated three times in Acts (here in chapter 9, and again in Saul's own testimony in chapters 22 and 26) — a repetition that signals its importance as the pivotal event of the second half of the book. Saul is introduced in Acts 7 at Stephen's stoning; the connection is intentional. The persecutor of the church becomes its greatest missionary. The man who held the garments of Stephen's murderers will himself be stoned at Lystra (Acts 14:19) and will eventually die for the same faith he attempted to destroy.

The voice from heaven — *"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"* — contains the most important theological statement in the conversion account: the identification of Christ with his church. Saul has been persecuting individual Christians; the risen Jesus takes the persecution as directed against himself. This is the Pauline doctrine of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12–27) expressed not as theology but as experience — the moment of Paul's conversion is simultaneously the moment of his deepest theological education.

The description of Saul's commission — *"he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel"* — maps exactly onto the outline of the second half of Acts: the Gentile mission, the appearances before kings (Agrippa in Acts 26), and the continued engagement with Israel in every city Paul visits.

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