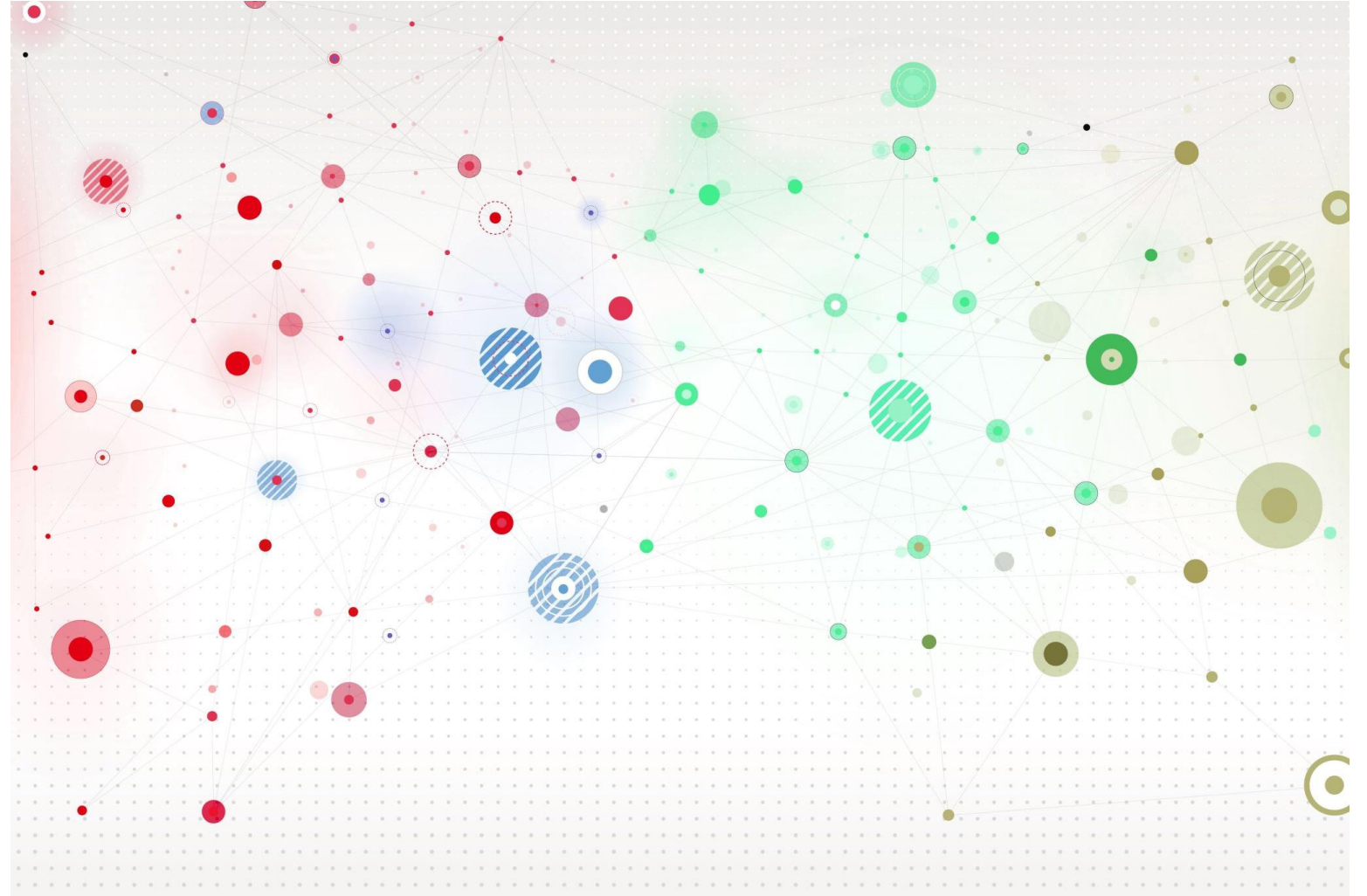

Welcoming a Foreign Enemy:

Surprising Hospitality in the Acts of the Apostles

*Rev. Dr. Rafael Rodríguez
Professor of New Testament
Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*



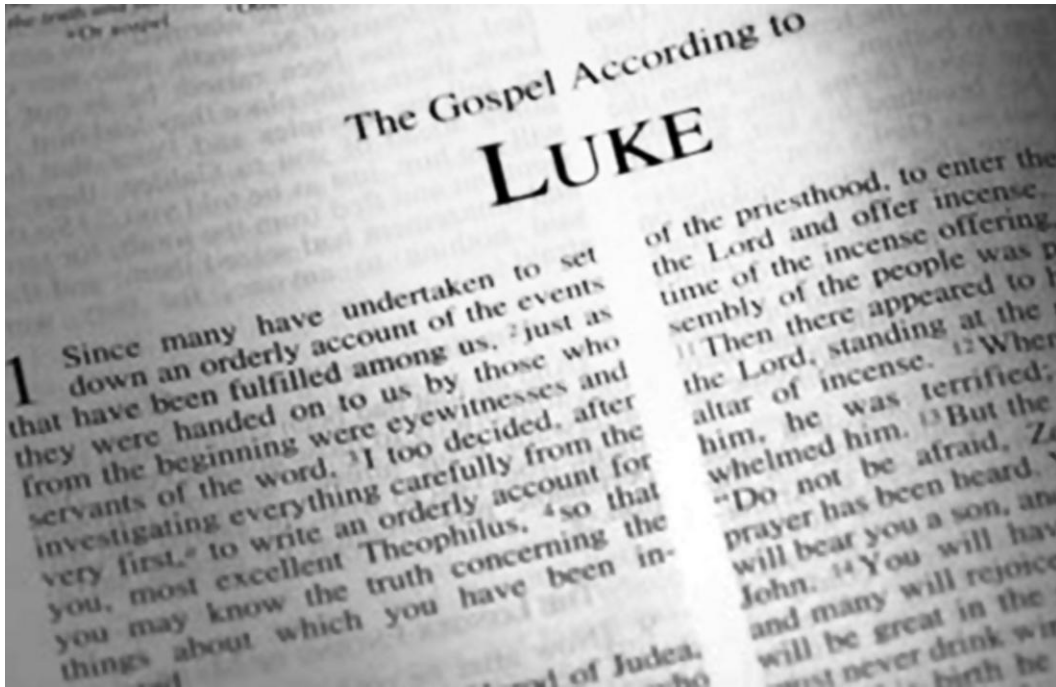
Welcoming a Foreign Enemy:

Surprising Hospitality in the Acts of the Apostles

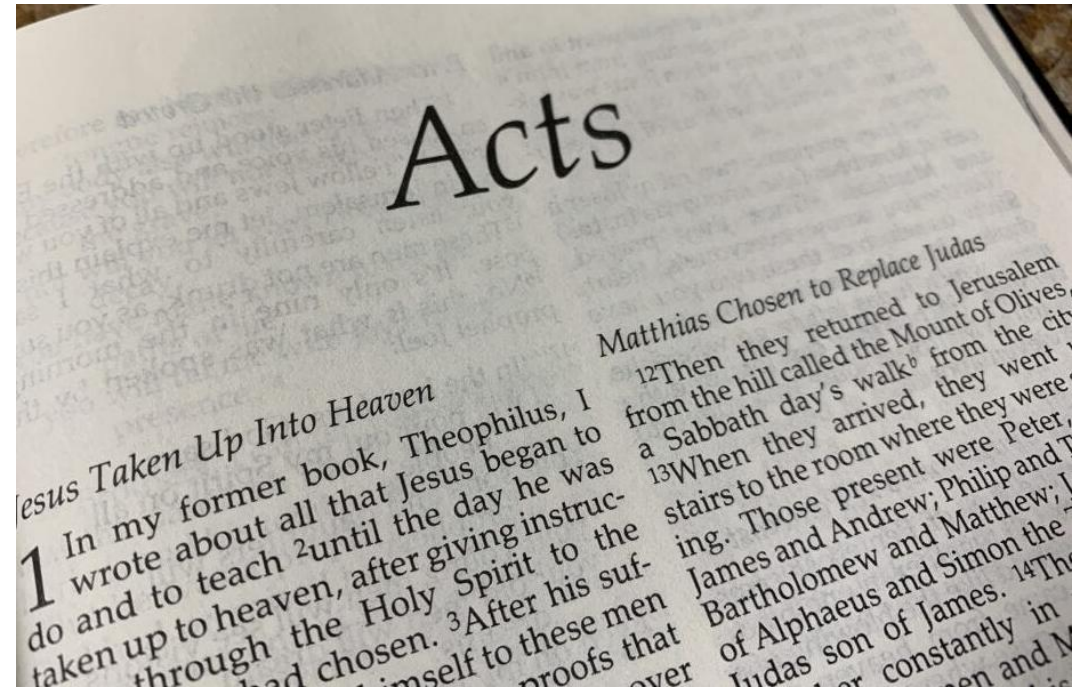
Big Ideas Thus Far:

- We **encounter** the Creator God of Israel in the poor, the unknown, the dispossessed, the oppressed.
- We **imitate** the Creator God of Israel in loving our enemies and persecutors.
- We **receive** Jesus by keeping his commandment to love one another.

Luke-Acts



+



²⁷ “But I say to you who are listening: **Love your enemies; do good to those who hate you;** ²⁸ **bless those who curse you; pray for those who mistreat you.** ²⁹ If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. ³⁰ Give to everyone who asks of you, and if anyone takes away what is yours, do not ask for it back again. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.

³² “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive payment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. ³⁵ **Instead, love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return.** Your reward will be great, and **you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.** ³⁶ **Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.**

Welcoming a Foreign Enemy



???

Surprising Hospitality in Acts:

Stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:51–60)

⁵¹ “You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are forever opposing the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do. ⁵² Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers. ⁵³ You are the ones who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet you have not kept it.”



Surprising Hospitality in Acts:

Stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:51–60)

⁵⁴ When they heard these things, they became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen. . . .

⁵⁸ Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him, and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.

⁵⁹ While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” ⁶⁰ Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, “**Lord, do not hold this sin against them.**” When he had said this, he died.



Surprising Hospitality in Acts:

Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10:1–48)

^{10:1} In Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian Cohort, as it was called. ² He was a devout man who feared God with all his household; he gave alms generously to the people and prayed constantly to God.





Surprising Hospitality in Acts:

Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10:1–48)

¹⁷ While Peter was greatly puzzled about what to make of the vision that he had seen, suddenly the men sent by Cornelius appeared. They were asking for Simon's house and were standing by the gate. . . .²² "Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish people, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say."²³ **So Peter invited them in and gave them lodging.**



Surprising Hospitality in Acts:

Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10:1–48)

²⁷ And as [Peter] talked with [Cornelius], he went in and found that many had assembled, ²⁸ and he said to them, **“You yourselves know that it is improper for a Jew to associate with or to visit an outsider, but God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean.**

²⁹ So when I was sent for, I came without objection. Now may I ask why you sent for me?”



Surprising Hospitality in Acts:

Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10:1–48)

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. . . . Then Peter said, ⁴⁷ “Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” ⁴⁸ So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. **Then they invited him to stay for several days.**



Surprising Hospitality in Acts:

Jerusalem hears about Peter and Cornelius (Acts 11:1–18)

^{11:1} Now the apostles and the brothers and sisters who were in Judea heard that the gentiles had also accepted the word of God. ² So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him, ³ saying, **“Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?”**



Surprising Hospitality in Acts:

Jerusalem hears about Peter and Cornelius (Acts 11:1–18)

¹⁵ “And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning. ¹⁶ And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ ¹⁷ If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?” ¹⁸ **When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, “Then God has given even to the gentiles the repentance that leads to life.”**



Surprising Hospitality in Acts:

The Gospel in Philippi (Acts 16:11–40)

Two acts of hospitality:

- Lydia welcomes Paul and his companions



Surprising Hospitality in Acts:

The Gospel in Philippi (Acts 16:11–40)

¹³ On the Sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. ¹⁴ A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth.



Surprising Hospitality in Acts:

The Gospel in Philippi (Acts 16:11–40)

The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. ¹⁵ When she and her household were baptized, **she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home.”** And she prevailed upon us.



Surprising Hospitality in Acts:

The Gospel in Philippi (Acts 16:11–40)

Two acts of hospitality:

- Lydia welcomes Paul and his companions
- the jailer welcomes Paul and Silas



Surprising Hospitality in Acts:

The Gospel in Philippi (Acts 16:11–40)

²⁰ When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said, **“These men, these Jews, are disturbing our city ²¹ and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us, being Romans, to adopt or observe.”** ²² The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods. ²³ After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely.



Surprising Hospitality in Acts:

The Gospel in Philippi (Acts 16:11–40)

²⁷ When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸ But Paul shouted in a loud voice, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.” ²⁹ The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas.



Surprising Hospitality in Acts:

The Gospel in Philippi (Acts 16:11–40)

³⁰ Then he brought them outside and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” ³¹ They answered, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” ³² They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.



Surprising Hospitality in Acts:

The Gospel in Philippi (Acts 16:11–40)

³³ At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay. ³⁴ He brought them up into the house and set food before them, and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.



Surprising Hospitality in Acts:

The Gospel in Philippi (Acts 16:11–40)

Two, even not the hospitality of hospitality:

- Lydia welcomes Paul and his companions
- the jailer welcomes Paul and Silas
- Paul and Silas welcome the jailer



Surprising Hospitality in Acts:

The Gospel in Philippi (Acts 16:11–40)

³³ At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; **then he and his entire family were baptized without delay.** ³⁴ He brought them up into the house and set food before them, and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.



Welcoming a Foreign Enemy:

Surprising Hospitality in the Acts of the Apostles

- We **encounter** the Creator God of Israel in the poor, the unknown, the dispossessed, the oppressed.
- We **imitate** the Creator God of Israel in loving our enemies and persecutors.
- We **receive** Jesus by keeping his commandment to love one another.
- We are **transformed** in the act of receiving and welcoming the enemy, foreign or otherwise.

Sunday, 3 May 2026

The Greatest Commandment: Loving and Inviting the Unknown in **the Synoptic Gospels**

Sunday, 10 May 2026

Seeing the Unknown Neighbor: Receiving and Rejecting Jesus in **the Fourth Gospel**

Sunday, 17 May 2026

Welcoming a Foreign Enemy: Surprising Hospitality in **the Acts of the Apostles**

Sunday, 24 May 2026

Sincere Hospitality: Dissent, Welcome, and Pursuit in **Paul's Letters**