

# Acts 05 - 2nd Persecution; Ananias & Sapphira; Intensified External Opposition; Apostles Tried Before Sanhedrin, Beaten

## I. Outreach in Jerusalem (Acts 1:1—7:60)

- (9) The deaths of Ananias and Sapphira (5:1-11)
- (10) Many miracles wrought by the apostles (5:12-16)
- (11) Persecution by the religious leaders (5:17-32)
- (12) Gamaliel's speech spares the apostles (5:33-42)

## Acts 5

- (9) The deaths of Ananias and Sapphira (5:1-11)

Satan has two strategies of attack on the church: the external attack, through outside/governmental persecution, which never works well for Satan because every time he does that, the church grows (Cf. 4:4). When that strategy doesn't work, he applies for membership in the church. He joins the music team, he teaches youth, he leads a small group, and he tries to invade the pulpit, trying to influence the church from within. After his first external attack in the last chapter, the events of this passage with Ananias and Sapphira represent Satan's first attempt to influence the church from the inside. We've already seen outside/governmental persecution (Cf. 4:1ff), which didn't work too well (Cf. 4:4), so now Satan tries his other strategy.

**1 But** a man named **Ananias**, with his wife **Sapphira**, sold a piece of property,

**1** But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property,

**1** But then a man named Ananias, with the consent of his wife Sapphira, sold some property.

**1** But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,

- "But" - the adverse conjunction connects us to the verses before about Barnabas (4:36-37)

— It introduces a second sacrificial act that appeared to be just as generous as Barnabas' (4:37); however, in this case, the motive was quite different

- "...Ananias" - "God is gracious"; unfortunately he didn't live up to his name

- "...Sapphira" - "Beautiful"; she was probably physically very beautiful, but inside she was corrupt (1 Peter 3:3-4)

- Ananias and Sapphira did just what Barnabas did (Cf. 4:37): they had real estate holdings, which they sold/liquidated
- Barnabas, however, did this with the proper motives. Ananias and Sapphira, as noted in the following passage, did not.

2 and **kept back** some of the proceeds for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet.

2 and kept back *some* of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet.

2 With his wife's full knowledge, he kept back some of the money for himself and brought the remainder and laid it at the apostles' feet.

2 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.

- Ananias and Sapphira engaged in a conspiracy (an agreement between two people to commit an unlawful act). You can be convicted of conspiracy if you take a substantial act toward your goal.

- "...kept back" - *nosphizō*, the same verb used of Achan (Cf. Joshua 7:1 [LXX])

- The sin of Ananias and Sapphira was not the "keeping back" of some of the proceeds from the sale. Their sin was in their public misrepresentation: they claimed that they laid all the proceeds at the apostles' feet, when in reality they did not (they secretly kept some of the proceeds for themselves).

- All of the proceeds from the sale were the property and under the control of Ananias and Sapphira. They could've chosen to not lay any of the proceeds at the apostles' feet and kept it all for themselves, and nothing would've been wrong with that.

- Ananias presented their gift to the apostles exactly like Barnabas had done (4:37)

- The problem is that they *said* they gave all of the proceeds to the apostles, but in reality they did not

3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan **filled** your heart to **lie** to the Holy Spirit and to keep back *some* of the proceeds of the land?

3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back *some* of the price of the land?

3 Peter asked, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart so that you should lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back some of the money you got for the land?

3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

- Peter is exercising the spiritual gift of discernment ("distinguishing of spirits" 1 Cor 12:10)...

- "...filled" - *plēroō*, the same word used to describe the "filling" of the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18). Ananias allowed Satan to fill him (control his heart) rather than the Holy Spirit.
- This is Satanic influence rather than demonic possession
- The meaning here refers to "influence." Ananias was a believer, so Satan could not "possess" him, but Satan is able to hold sway and influence believers, which is what happened here
- When a believer indulges or goes back to the sin nature, which is still alive and well inside of them, they are giving/allowing Satan sway/influence over our lives. We can say no to our sin nature and shut that influence down, but if we indulge it, we give Satan an in-road/opportunity to hold sway/influence in our life (Cf. 1 Chr 21:1; Matt 16:21-23; Rom 12:21; Eph 4:26-27).
- Ananias and Sapphira were clearly saved (Cf. v11), but they gave Satan an opportunity to influence them by indulging their sin nature (they wanted the church to think more highly of them and their generosity). Satan took the opportunity, filled them, and led them into sin
- "...lie" - Ananias tried to deceive the church by trying to gain a reputation for greater generosity than he deserved
- His sin was hypocrisy, a form of lying; he misrepresented his gift by claiming that it was the total payment that he had received when it was really only a portion

4 While it remained *unsold*, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? **Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God."**

4 While it remained *unsold*, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

4 As long as it remained unsold, wasn't it your own? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? So how could you have thought of doing what you did? You didn't lie only to men, but also to God!"

4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

- Peter's words here make it clear that Ananias and Sapphira were under no obligation to sell their property in the first place, and once they did, they were under no obligation to donate any of the proceeds from the sale

— Private ownership and personal control of private property is a concept that abounds in Scripture (Ex 20:15,17)

— Giving only part of the proceeds to the church was not the sin. The sin was that he gave only a part while claiming to have given it all. They misrepresented their generosity.

- "...Why *is it* that you have conceived this deed in your heart? " - Satan did not make him do it. Ananias chose to do it because his greed led him to the conception of sin.
- Because of the conception of this idea in his heart, which led to the deliberate intention to deceive, Satan was able to gain control. Satan entered into Ananias because of the sin of greed.
- "...You have not lied to men, but to God" - in v3, Peter accused them of lying to the Holy Spirit; here, he states that they lied to God. This is one of the clearest passages equating the Holy Spirit as God.
- By attempting to deceive the Church, he was also trying to deceive the Holy Spirit, who indwells the Church; in attempting to deceive the Holy Spirit, he is attempting to deceive God

*The fact that believers had the right to keep their money shows that this was not Christian socialism. It was a free-will arrangement for the support of the church, used only temporarily because evidently the early church expected Christ to come in their generation. [Toussaint]*

### **Was Jesus a Socialist?**

Socialism is the political and economic theory of social organization which advocates that the means of production, distribution, and exchange should be owned or regulated by the community as a whole. Since it is a political and economic theory, it always means that in reality the government owns or regulates the economy. When the government regulates but does not own the means of production, it is called fascism (as in Nazi Germany). When the government owns and controls the means of production, it is communism. Both fascism and communism fit into the broader idea of socialism.

Those who make the case that the Bible promotes socialism, based on the activities of some within the early church, fail to find anywhere in Acts where the government owned or regulated any part of the means of production. Instead, the government (religious leaders) were attempting to suppress the preaching of the gospel.

Elsewhere in Scripture, individual personal property rights assumed. For example, the 8th and 10th commandments both assume individual property rights. How can one steal or covet another's possessions if there is not personal property? Throughout the Mosaic Law, individual property rights are also assumed. In Acts, how can one sell personal property and give the proceeds to the apostles if there was no personal property (Cf. Acts 2:44-45).

5 And as he heard these words, Ananias **collapsed and died**; and **great fear came over all who heard** *about it*.

5 And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it.

5 When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died. And great fear seized everyone who heard about it.

**5** And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

- Peter identified Ananias' sin (v4); God judged it (v5)

- Just as God protected the nation of Israel in their infancy by judging Achan's sin, He protected the church in its infancy by judging Ananias' and Sapphira's sin

- "...collapsed and died" - *ekpsycho*, used in NT when God strikes someone in judgment (Cf. v10; 12:23; Cf. Judges 4:21 [LXX])

- Because the church was in its infancy, God dealt drastically with this sin by prematurely terminating the lives of Ananias and Sapphira. Such drastic discipline had a purifying effect on the church by deterring other believers from committing the same sin (Cf. v11)

- A believer can never be a candidate for eternal retribution (loss of salvation), however God can discipline believers to keep them from practicing sin (Heb 12:5-11; Rev 3:19)

- God unleashed divine discipline on Ananias here (Cf. Heb 12:5-13). Divine discipline is like spanking of a child...the parent does not spank the child to hurt or injure them, they spank him so that the child will associate the pain of the spanking with the wrongdoing, and next time they are thinking about doing the wrong, they associate the pain that comes with it.

- Divine discipline is not judgment, it's correction from a place of love

- Sometimes divine discipline takes the form of death of the believer. God, for whatever reason, decides to impose maximum divine discipline on His child (Cf. 1 Cor 11:30; 1 John 5:16; Rev 2:20-23).

- "...great fear came over all who heard" - the unleashing of maximum divine discipline had a purifying effect on the church (Cf. v11)

6 The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they **buried** him.

6 The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him.

6 The young men got up, wrapped him up, carried him outside, and buried him.

6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.

- "...buried" - at least they had enough respect for Ananias to bury him. Not burying someone in the Bible is a sign of great disrespect (Cf. 1 Sam 31:10; Acts 14:19; Rev 11:9).

- Peter was probably just as surprised as everyone else. Peter just confronted him with the issue and the guy died!

- The error was not the gift, nor the sale of the land. And the error was not in giving it (or not giving it) to the Church. The error was playing it one way and presenting it another.

Basically, the sin of hypocrisy.

We should not interpret the fact that God rarely deals with sinners this way as evidence that He cannot or should not. He does not do so out of mercy. He dealt with Ananias and Sapphira, Achan, Nadab and Abihu, and others—severely—when He began to deal with various groups of believers. He did so for those who would follow in the train of those judged, in order to illustrate how important it is for God's people to be holy (Cf. 1 Cor 10:6). Furthermore God always deals more severely with those who have greater privilege and responsibility (Cf. Luke 12:48; 1 Peter 4:17).

7 Now an interval of about three hours elapsed, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.

7 Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.

7 After an interval of about three hours, Ananias' wife came in, not knowing what had happened.

7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

8 And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for this price?" And she said, "Yes, for that price."

8 And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?" And she said, "Yes, that was the price."

8 So Peter asked her, "Tell me, did you sell the land for that price?"  
She answered, "Yes, that was the price."

8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

- Peter asked Sapphira a question about the proceeds she received from the sale, and whether that amount matched the amount that they laid at the apostles' feet

— Peter obviously knew the amount they donated and knew the amount that they sold the real estate for

— Peter is giving Sapphira, who was in on the conspiracy but didn't know what had happened to Ananias, an opportunity to come clean

9 Then Peter *said* to her, "Why *is it* that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as *well*."

9 Then Peter *said* to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out *as well*."

9 "How could you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?" Peter asked her. "Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and these men will carry you outside as well."

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

- Peter, having caught Sapphira in her lie, tell her that the young men who just finished burying your husband have returned from that task, and are now ready to bury you

10 And immediately she collapsed at his feet and died; and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

10 And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

10 She instantly fell down at Peter's feet and died. When the young men came in, they found her dead. So they carried her out and buried her next to her husband.

10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.

- Sapphira immediately died

11 And great fear came over the whole **church**, and over all who heard *about* these things.

11 And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things.

11 And great fear seized the whole church and everyone else who heard about this.

11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

- The fear that came over the church is evidence that both Ananias and Sapphira were saved; Ananias and Sapphira were part of the church, and witnessing God's maximum divine discipline first-hand struck fear in the church.

- "...church" - *ekklēsia*, the first time the Greek word translated "church" is used after Pentecost

*In the book of Acts, both Israel and the Church exist simultaneously. The term Israel is used 20x and ekklēsia (Church) 19x, yet the two groups are always kept distinct.*

[Fruchtenbaum]

### **Three Concluding Observations: Acts 5:1-11**

1. Peter's apostolic authority (Cf. Matt 16:19)

- Peter had the authority to do what he did because he was an apostle and was given apostolic authority
2. Discipline is always stricter at the start of a new dispensation (Cf. Lev 10:1-2)
    - When God begins a new dispensation, the judgment of God tends to be more severe and pointed than during other times
  3. Judgment begins in the house of the Lord (1 Peter 4:17)

### **Background on Ananias and Sapphira**

The events of Acts 5:1-11 must be understood in harmony with the communal living arrangement practiced by the early church. Jews, who traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost, heard Peter's message (Acts 2:14-36), and 3,000 of these Jews trusted in Christ as their Savior (2:41).

Because they had become saved, they needed to learn new doctrine. Since the NT was not yet written, they remained in Jerusalem to learn from the apostles (Acts 2:42). Because their employment was back home and they had originally planned to remain in Jerusalem just a short while (to just celebrate Pentecost), they were without means of support. Thus, the believers in Jerusalem liquidated their property so that the new converts would have available cash to support the remaining Jewish believers to remain in Jerusalem to learn from the apostles. This forms the background of Ananias and Sapphira's decision to sell their property and give the proceeds to the church.

The problem comes in when they sold their property and gave only part of the proceeds to the church rather than all of the proceeds, all the while publicly misrepresenting the fact that they had given *all* the money from the sale to the church. Their sin was *not* that they had kept back part of the proceeds for themselves. Concerning their property, Peter notes, "While it remained *unsold*, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control?" The private ownership and personal control of private property is a concept that abounds in Scripture (Ex 20:15,17). Rather, their sin related to the fact that they had misrepresented their level of generosity. This sin involved not only a lie to the church but a lie to God (Acts 5:4b). In its simplest form, hypocrisy.

### **The Church's Second Persecution (Acts 5:12-42)**

God's power, manifest through the apostles in blessing (3:1-26) as well as in judgment (5:1-11), made an increasingly powerful impact on the residents of Jerusalem. The Jewish leaders increased their opposition to the apostles, just as they had increased their opposition to Jesus. Luke preserved the record of the developing attitudes that resulted. The Sadducees became more jealous and antagonistic, the Pharisees chose to react with moderation, and the Christians gained greater joy and confidence.

(10) Many miracles wrought by the apostles (5:12-16)

**12** At the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people; and they were **alltogether** in **Solomon's portico**.

**12** At the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's portico.

**12** Now many signs and wonders were being performed by the apostles among the people, who were gathered together in Solomon's Colonnade.

**12** And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.

- After the church was cleansed and purified and Satan's agenda was thwarted by God, the church takes on renewed authority and power (2 Cor 12:12)

— Luke reiterates again here what has been stated before (Cf. 2:43; 3:6-7; 4:22,33): every single miracle that took place in Acts was performed by an apostle, or by someone under the delegated authority of an apostle. The every day Christian did not perform miracles.

- "...all together" - in one accord; this is an answer to Jesus' high priestly prayer (John 17:20-23)

- "...Solomon's portico" - initially, while waiting for Pentecost, the believers gathered in the Upper Room

— However as the church grew (from 3000 at Pentecost to 5000 (Cf. 4:4)), maybe as high as 8000-10000 at this point, these people could no longer fit in the Upper Room so they began meeting in Solomon's porch (Cf. 3:11)

— Notice that as time goes on, these believers did not see the need to start churches or branch out; they were perfectly content to continue meeting in the temple. Because every believer was a Jew at this point, they saw Christianity as the fulfillment of Judaism.

— The church today has drawn a line between Christianity and Judaism, but the early church never did that because they saw Judaism as pointing to Jesus Christ

*Verse 12 provides evidence of apostolic authority. The account of the second persecution of the church begins by describing the apostolic signs (v12a). Again it is important to note that in the book of Acts, only the apostles and the apostolic delegates, who were appointed by the apostles by the laying on of hands, were able to perform miracles, signs, and wonders (Cf. 6:8). This fact has come out 4x before (Cf. 2:43; 3:6-7; 4:22,33), and now it is repeated once again in this verse. [Fruchtenbaum]*

**13** But **none of the rest** dared to associate with **them**; however, **the people held them in high esteem**.

**13** But none of the rest dared to associate with them; however, the people held them in high esteem.

13 None of the others dared join them, although the rest of the people continued to hold them in high regard.

13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.

- "...none of the rest" - Jewish unbelievers

- They steered clear of the Christians because of the Jewish leaders' opposition (4:18)

- "...them" - the believers gathered in Solomon's portico

- "...the people held them in high esteem" - refers to the same groups of Jewish unbelievers ("none of the rest")

- The Jewish unbelievers had two reactions toward this group of believers: they didn't want to associate too closely with them because of how the Sanhedrin/Sadducees viewed them, but from a distance these unbelievers actually held this group of Christians in high esteem.

14 And increasingly believers in the Lord, large numbers of men and women, were being added to *their number*,

14 And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to *their number*,

14 Nevertheless, believers were being added to the Lord in increasing numbers—both men and women.

14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)

- Luke stopped giving numbers for the size of the church (Cf. 1:15; 2:41; 4:4) and just noted that God was adding "multitudes" of both "men and women" to the church constantly

- The Greek means that people "kept on being added"; in spite of the fear of the general population, Jews were still coming to the Lord

### **Progress Reports in Acts**

- Clearest: 2:47; 4:4; 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; 28:30-31
- Less clear: 1:15; 2:41; 4:31; **5:14,42**; 8:25,40; 11:21; 13:49; 17:6

15 to such an extent that they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on any of them.

15 to such an extent that they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on any one of them.

15 As a result, people kept carrying their sick into the streets and placing them on stretchers and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he went by.

15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.

- While not documented directly, there were tremendous healings taking place, so much so that people would bring their sick loved ones out into the streets so that Peter's shadow might be cast on any of them
- In Acts, Luke juxtaposes Peter and Paul. We don't know anything about Paul yet (Cf. Acts 9), but what Luke does in the second half of Acts (chapters 13-28) is show that Paul was just as legitimate as Peter, even though Paul was not one of the original apostles (Cf. 1 Cor 15:8-9).
- It was probably Paul that impacted Theophilus more than anyone, so Theophilus may have been wondering that since he was saved through the preaching of Paul, if his salvation was legitimate
- Luke is telling Theophilus in Acts that his salvation was indeed legitimate because everything that Peter did in Acts, Paul later did as well

From Peter to Paul	
Peter	Paul
Heals a man lame from birth (3:1-11)	Heals a man lame from birth (14:8-18)
Heals by shadow (5:15-16)	Heals by handkerchief (19:11-12)
Success is a cause of jealousy (5:17)	Success is a cause of jealousy (13:45)
Confronts a sorcerer (8:9-24)	Confronts a sorcerer (13:6-11)
Raises Dorcas (9:36-41)	Raises Eutychus (20:9-12)
Jailed and miraculously freed (12:3-19)	Jailed and miraculously freed (16:25-34)

16 The people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together as well, bringing people who were sick or tormented with unclean spirits, and they were **all** being healed.

16 Also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all being healed.

16 Crowds continued coming in—even from the towns around Jerusalem—bringing their sick and those who were troubled by unclean spirits, and all of them were healed.

16 There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

- Can Satan or demons cause sickness? Yes.
- Can sin cause sickness? Yes.

- Is every sickness attributable to Satan/demons? No.
- Is every sickness attributable to sin? No.
- We need to be very careful about attributing certain things that happen in a person's life to one thing or another. We should not be assuming things in a person's life that we know nothing about. Most people are sick simply because we live in a fallen, sinful world (Cf. Gen 3:19; 2 Cor 4:16).
- "...all" - everyone who came to the apostles for healing were healed; the tense shows they were healed "one at a time"
- This certainly wasn't true as time went on...Paul suffered from "frequent illnesses" (Gal 4:13); he suffered from a thorn in the flesh that God refused to take away from him (2 Cor 12:7-10).
- This verse is one of the texts that advocates of the "prosperity gospel" appeal to as proof that it is never God's will for anyone to be sick. Other texts they use include: Ex 15:26; 23:25; Ps 103:3; Prov 4:20-22; Is 33:24; Jer 30:17; Matt 4:23; 10:1; Mark 16:16-18; Luke 6:17-19; Acts 10:38.

*They brought two categories of people to the apostles for healing: those with physical problems and those who had demonic problems. The latter group also may have had physical illnesses, but in their case, the physical issues were caused by demons. This verse makes a clear distinction between mere physical sickness and demonic problems. It is wrong to teach that all physical afflictions are caused by demons. In fact, the majority of physical ailments are due to human frailty, not due to sin or to demons. [Fruchtenbaum]*

Church was obedient —> Church was Spirit-filled  
 Church was Spirit-filled —> Church was pure  
 Church was pure —> Church was powerful

### **Not all physical infirmities are attributable to Satan/Demons**

Below is a list of all the physical infirmities listed in Matthew's Gospel, and none of them were attributed to Satan or demons:

- Matt 8:5-13
- Matt 9:19-20,27-30
- Matt 12:9-14
- Matt 14:35-36

*One at a time, one by one, everyone who came to the apostles walked away cured. This is certainly not true of faith healers today. There have been people who have gone to faith healers and have come back claiming to have been healed, but a year later they were dead*

*of that very thing they were 'healed' of. Merely exercising 'positive confession' will not do any more than 'positive thinking' will do. These mental exercises may heal psychosomatic problems, but they will not heal genuine physical ailments. God may choose to heal miraculously; He may choose to heal through medical treatment today; He may choose not to heal at all. Although faith healers claim to be performing the same miracles as the apostles, they cannot do what these apostles did. [Fruchtenbaum]*

(11) Persecution by the religious leaders (5:17-32)

**17** But the high priest **stood up**, along with all his associates (that is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were **filled with jealousy**.

**17** But the high priest rose up, along with all his associates (that is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with jealousy.

**17** Then the high priest and all those from the sect of the Sadducees who were with him were filled with jealousy. So they went out,

**17** Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,

- The high priest at the time was Annas (Cf. 4:6)

- "...stood up" - *anastas*, took official action

— This was not the total Sanhedrin, but the Sadducees who were the power group that controlled the Sanhedrin at the time; same was true of the first persecution of the church

— It was the Pharisees who had led in the persecution against Jesus, but it is the Sadducees who lead the persecution against the early church

— The healings were an embarrassment to them as they denied the supernatural

— Religion is always in the way of grace. You would've thought that these religious leaders would be thrilled that so many people were being healed, but instead they were jealous of their power and influence over the people being transferred to the apostles.

— What really irritated these Sadducees is that the apostles kept talking about the resurrection (Cf. 2:24; 3:15), and the Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection (Cf. Matt 22:23)

- "...filled with jealousy" - the Holy Spirit filled the believers, Satan filled Ananias and Sapphira, and now jealousy filled the Sanhedrin, particularly the Pharisees

**18** They laid hands on the apostles and put them in a public prison.

**18** They laid hands on the apostles and put them in a public jail.

**18** arrested the apostles, and put them in the city jail.

**18** And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.

- Now it's getting physical...the persecution is escalating

— Before it was only Peter and John who were arrested, then later set free. Now it was all of the apostles who were arrested and put into prison.

19 But during the night **an angel** of the Lord opened the gates of the prison, and leading them out, he said,

19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the gates of the prison, and taking them out he said,

19 But at night the angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and led them out. The angel told them,

19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,

- This is the first time an angel is dispatched from heaven to help the apostles in a time of need

— This is the job description of angels: ministering spirits, sent out to provide service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation (Heb 1:14)

— This is the purpose of the angel's existence: to render service to God's people while they are here on earth

— Angels were very active during the early church (Cf. here; 8:26; 12:7-10,23)

— This is the first of three "jail door miracles" that Luke recorded in Acts (Cf. Peter in 12:6-11; Paul and Silas in 16:26-27)

20 "Go, **stand** and speak to the people in the temple *are* **the whole message of this Life.**"

20 "Go, stand and speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this Life."

20 "Go, stand in the Temple, and keep on telling the people the whole message about this life they can have."

20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

- Notice that the command of the angel directly contradicted the command of the religious authorities. The angel told the apostles to do just the opposite of what the Sadducees told them to do (Cf. 4:17-18)

— The angel gave the apostles a command that directly contradicted the command of the governmental authorities (Cf. v29)

- "...the whole message of this Life" - life really begins when a person believes the gospel of salvation

— One of the greatest deceptions of Satan to unsaved people is that he gets them to believe that if they believe in the gospel, their life will be ruined. But reality is the opposite: our life really begins when we submit ourselves to our Creator.

John 10:10: The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came so that they would have life, and have *it* abundantly.

21 Upon hearing *this*, they entered into the temple *area* about daybreak and *began* to teach.

Now when the high priest and his associates came, they called the **Council** together, that is, all **the Senate of the sons of Israel**, and sent *orders* to the prison for them to be brought.

21 Upon hearing *this*, they entered into the temple about daybreak and *began* to teach.

Now when the high priest and his associates came, they called the Council together, even all the Senate of the sons of Israel, and sent *orders* to the prison house for them to be brought.

21 After the apostles heard this, they went into the Temple at daybreak and began to teach. The high priest and those who were with him arrived, called the Council and all the elders of Israel together, and sent word to the prison to have the men brought in.

**21** And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

- "...they" - the apostles

- The moment that the angel released them from prison, the apostles immediately went out and obeyed the command of the angel

- The situation now is that it just isn't a particular religious sect (the Sadducees) coming against the apostles, but "all" of the Senate. It is now the entire governmental authority that is coming after the apostles.

22 But the officers who came did not find them in the prison; and they returned and reported,

22 But the officers who came did not find them in the prison; and they returned and reported back,

22 When the Temple police got there, they did not find them in the prison. They came back and reported,

**22** But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told,

23 saying, "We found the prison locked quite securely and the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened *them*, we found no one inside."

23 saying, "We found the prison house locked quite securely and the guards standing at the doors; but when we had opened up, we found no one inside."

23 "We found the prison securely locked and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them, we found no one inside."

23 Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.

- Similar to Jesus' empty tomb...

24 Now when the captain of the temple *guard* and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed about them as to what would come of this.

24 Now when the captain of the temple *guard* and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed about them as to what would come of this.

24 When the commander of the Temple guards and the high priests heard these words, they were utterly at a loss as to what could have happened to them.

24 Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.

- The leaders were more concerned about the public relations issue this may cause, rather than the facts of the case

25 But someone came and reported to them, "The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple *area* and teaching the people!"

25 But someone came and reported to them, "The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!"

25 Then someone came and told them, "Look! The men you put in prison are standing in the Temple and teaching the people!"

25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.

- Blatant civil disobedience by the apostles...they immediately obeyed the command of the angel and went right back into the temple and began preaching the life of Christ, including His resurrection

26 Then the captain went along with the officers and *proceeded* to bring them *back* without violence (for they were afraid of the people, that they might be stoned).

26 Then the captain went along with the officers and *proceeded* to bring them *back* without violence (for they were afraid of the people, that they might be stoned).

26 So the commander of the Temple guards went with his men to bring them back without force, because they were afraid of being stoned to death by the people.

**26** Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.

- So the authorities arrest the apostles yet again, but this time peacefully and without violence because the hearts of the people were trending toward the apostles' teaching and witness
- The authorities were afraid that if they got violent, the people would revolt and those who were arresting the apostles would be stoned to death. The same thing happened to Jesus (Cf. Matt 21:46).
- The identical ministry that Jesus had while He was on the earth is being replicated by the apostles in the Church Age
- This is the second external attack against the apostles/church

27 When they had brought them, they had them stand before the Council. The high priest interrogated them,

27 When they had brought them, they stood them before the Council. The high priest questioned them,

27 When they brought them back, they made them stand before the Council, and the high priest began to question them.

27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them,

- The persecution is escalating because now the apostles are standing before the entire Council, and they are being questioned by the high priest

28 saying, "We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring **this Man's** blood upon us."

28 saying, "We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."

28 He said, "We gave you strict orders not to teach in his name, didn't we? Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to bring this man's blood on us!"

28 Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

- The charge against the apostles was that they continued to teach in the name of Jesus, even after they were commanded to stop (Cf. 4:17-18)

— What compounded the problem for the Council was that their teaching had "filled Jerusalem" meaning that nearly everyone had heard of their teaching, and it was beginning to have an impact on the people

— The number one thing that Satan wants to stop is the consistent and forthright teaching of the Word of God

- "...this Man's" - their hatred of Jesus was so real that they couldn't even bring themselves to mention His name
- Satan hates the name of Jesus because at some point, every knee will bow at the speaking of His name (Cf. Phil 2:9-10)
- He also hates it because the name of Jesus is necessary for salvation (Cf. 4:12)
- The accusation here from the Council that the apostles intended to bring this Man's blood upon them is interesting, because they already did that themselves (Cf. Matt 27:25). That's an interesting accusation against the apostles when they had already done that upon themselves.

29 But Peter and the apostles answered, "We **must** obey God rather than men.

29 But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men.

29 But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men!

**29** Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

- Peter, who once vehemently denied Christ to a petite servant girl in the middle of the night, now stands up defiantly to the entire Council

— This is a fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in Matt 16:18, that He would build the church on the foundation of Peter's confession

- "...must" - *dei*, something that is absolutely essential, not optional (Cf. Luke 4:43; 24:44)

— The apostles had a choice to make: either follow Jesus' command (Cf. 1:8) or follow the Council's command (4:17-18). Peter says that they "must" follow Jesus' command.

- The apostles knew of the command/gag order not to teach any more in Jesus' name, but you have forced us into a situation where we can either obey God or we can obey you. And in this case, as in all cases, we're going to choose to obey God.

## Principles of Civil Disobedience

1. Clear conflict between the laws of man and the laws of God
  - Key word is "clear" as in this case with Daniel's three friends
2. Exhaustion of all creative legal remedies
  - Paul says, As much as possible, live in peace with all men
  - Civil disobedience is not a first resort but a last resort
3. A willingness to pay the consequences
  - The blood of Christ saves us from hell, but that doesn't save us from temporal consequences
4. Maintaining respect for civil authorities
  - As civil disobedience is taking place, there is still respect for the God-given institution of government

So what are Christians to do when a government gets tyrannical, and begins to coerce you out of your convictions? The entire reason this subject is raised here and now is that, after 800 years, Israel is no longer in the land. They are now living under Gentile control, outside the land of Israel.

So what do you do when the government coerces you to do something that God forbids you to do (i.e. worship a statue, Dan 3)? Or what do you do when the government forbids you to do something that God commands you to do (i.e. prayer, Dan 6)? These circumstances open the door for civil disobedience (Acts 5:29).

30 The God of our fathers **raised up** Jesus, whom **you** put to death by **hanging Him on a cross**.

30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross.

30 The God of our ancestors raised Jesus to life after you killed him by hanging him on a tree.

30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

- Peter doesn't mince words...

- He never mentions Jesus Christ without blaming them for the crucifixion

- The God of the Jewish people, their own God, raised Jesus from the dead

- "...raised up" - *egeirō*, a concept that the Jewish mind would understand very well

- Throughout the time of the Judges, God "raised up" different judges to deliver Israel (Cf. Judges 2:18)

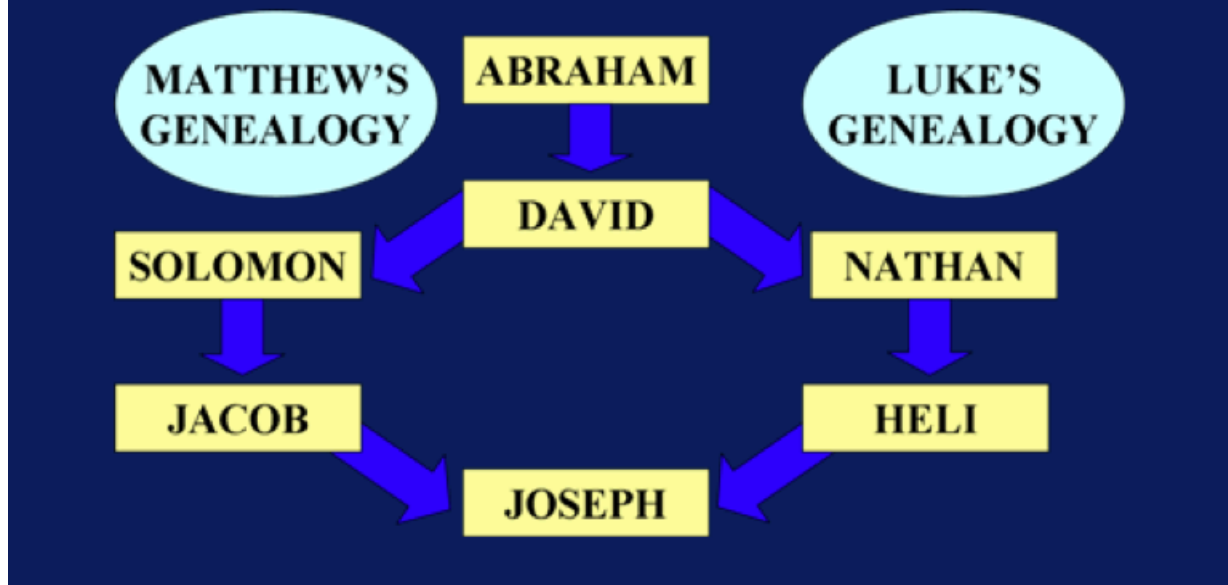
- God "raised up" these judges to save Israel; here, God "raised up" Jesus to save Israel, but they rejected Him

- "...you" - the Jewish religious leaders (Cf. 2:23)

- "...hanging Him on a cross" - according to Jewish law, hanging someone on a tree was to treat them as a common criminal (Deut 21:22-23; Gal 3:13)

- "cross" - *xylon*, wood; a tree (Cf. 10:39; 1 Peter 2:24)

## Matthean and Lukan Genealogies



The genealogies of Matthew (Joseph) and Luke (Mary) take separate paths back to David. This fact is why the virgin birth of Christ does not disqualify Jesus from the Davidic promises.

31 He is the one whom God **exalted** to His **right hand** as a **Prince** and a Savior, **to grant repentance to Israel**, and forgiveness of sins.

31 He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

31 God has exalted to his right hand this very man as our Leader and Savior in order to extend repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.

31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

- A repeat of what he said in 2:23-24

- "...exalted" - Jesus' exaltation included His Resurrection, His Ascension into Heaven, and His present session at the right hand of God the Father

- See [Present Ministry of Christ](#) for details about how Jesus is working today.

- "...right hand" - a place of honor (Cf. Ps 110:1)

- Whom the world treated as a common criminal, God the Father sat in the position of honor

- "...Prince" - Jesus is again referred to as a Prince, not a King (Cf. 3:15)

- The reason why Jesus is not referred to as a King is that Israel did not enthrone Him as King. The only crown He ever wore was a crown of thorns.
- "...to grant repentance to Israel" - the purpose of Jesus' death and Resurrection; He will perform this in the future
- Jesus' purpose is to convert Israel; 3:19-21 explains what Israel has to do to bring in kingdom conditions to the earth (Cf. Matt 23:39)
- Granting repentance to Israel cannot mean that He gave the nation the gift of repentance, because only a few repented. Rather, the expression means that God gave the people of Israel the *opportunity* for repentance.
- The repentance of the nation of Israel is the prerequisite to the Second Coming
- "...forgiveness of sins" - Peter pointed to Jesus' future mission, the remission of sins, which was accomplished by His death
- In the future, He will remove the sins of Israel; His present mission is to remove the sins of those who believe

32 And **we** are **witnesses** of these things; and so *is* the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who **obeyHim**."

32 And we are witnesses of these things; and so *is* the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."

32 We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who keep on obeying him."

32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

- "...we" - the apostles

- "...witnesses" - the NT, especially the Gospels, are based on eyewitness accounts of the events that took place

— The apostles went on to die in very horrific fashion late in their lives. This is a great apologetic for the truthfulness of Scripture because people don't die for a lie. Each of these apostles died a painful death because they were eyewitnesses to the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- The first witnesses of the death and resurrection of Christ was the apostles; the second witness is the Holy Spirit

- "...obey Him" - so the Holy Spirit only indwells obedient believers? No (Cf. Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 12:13).

— Obedience here is as John defines it in John 3:36...obey = to believe. To be obedient to God is to believe in Jesus Christ.

What Happened to Christ's Disciples?		
Disciple	Place	Martyrdom
James the Son of Alphaeus	Jerusalem	Clubbed to death
Simon the Zealot	Jerusalem	Martyred
James the Son of Zebedee	Judea (Acts 12:2)	Executed
Thaddeus	Mesopotamia	Beaten to death
Peter	Babylon, Rome	Crucified upside down
John	Asia Minor, Patmos, Ephesus	Fried in boiling oil
Philip	E Turkey	Tortured & crucified
Thomas	India	Speared
Bartholomew	India	Flayed & crucified
Andrew	Ukraine, Russia, Greece	Hanged
Matthew	Parthia (Tehran)	Beheaded

The relationship of obedience to indwelling is spelled out in v32, which concerns the obedience of an unbeliever. An unbeliever must obey something to receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and that is the "obedience of faith." The obedience that the unbeliever must have in v32 to receive the indwelling Spirit is the obedience of faith, and faith is not a work (6:7; Rom 1:5; 16:26). The only command one must obey to receive the Holy Spirit is the command to believe on the Lord Jesus. That is the "obedience of faith" by which one receives the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The means of indwelling is faith.

(12) Gamaliel's speech spares the apostles (5:33-42)

**33** But when **they** heard *this*, they became **infuriated** and *nearly* decided to **execute** them.

**33** But when they heard this, they were cut to the quick and intended to kill them.

**33** When the Council heard this, they became furious and wanted to kill them.

**33** When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.

- "...they" - the Sanhedrin

- "...infuriated" - *diapriō*, "cut to the quick" [NASB95]; convicted (Cf. John 16:8; Acts 2:37)

— When you're under conviction, you do one of two things: submit and follow through with the conviction, or you suppress it

— When you suppress the conviction of the Holy Spirit, it often manifests itself in uncontrolled rage

- You see this when you share the gospel with an unbeliever or a backslidden believer, and they all of a sudden become enraged at you, they attack you personally
- When God did not accept the sacrifice of Cain because he did not come to God on God's terms, he became angry (Gen 4:5). When Nathan confronted David with a parable, which mirrored David's sin with Bathsheba, David's anger burned greatly (2 Sam 12:5).
- We should be joyful during these times because it's evidence that they are under conviction
- "...execute" - this is often the reaction of religion; the apostles had broken the command of the Sanhedrin, so they wanted to punish the apostles
- However the real reason they wanted to kill the apostles was out of anger that arose from the conviction of the Holy Spirit upon them

34 But a Pharisee named **Gamaliel**, a teacher of the Law, respected by all the people, **stood up** in the Council and gave orders to put the men outside for a short time.

34 But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law, respected by all the people, stood up in the Council and gave orders to put the men outside for a short time.

34 But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law who was respected by all the people, stood up in the Council and ordered the men to be taken outside for a little while.

34 Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;

- "...Gamaliel" - a Pharisee among Pharisees; at the same level as Nicodemus (Cf. John 3:10)

— He was Paul's teacher before he was saved (Cf. 22:3)

- Gamaliel wanted to talk to his fellow Sanhedrin members alone, outside of the apostles' hearing, so he excused them from the chambers

35 And he said to them, "Men of Israel, be careful as to what you are about to do with these men.

35 And he said to them, "Men of Israel, take care what you propose to do with these men.

35 Then he told them, "Fellow Israelis, consider carefully what you propose to do to these men.

35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.

- In the context of the Sanhedrin's rage and desire to kill the apostles, Gamaliel offers some wisdom and advises caution...

— We often put our mouth into motion before our brain can get started, and that's exactly what the Sanhedrin did (v33)

36 For, some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and a group of about four hundred men joined him. But he was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing.

36 For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a group of about four hundred men joined up with him. But he was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing.

36 For in the recent past Theudas appeared, claiming that he was important, and about 400 men joined him. He was killed, and all his followers were dispersed and disappeared.

36 For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought.

- Gamaliel uses a recent historical example of a person (Theudas) who became popular and garnered a following, but then he died and the whole uprising dispersed

- We have no extra-biblical documentation of Theudas other than what is stated here

- He was evidently a rebel and gathered a following of about 400 men. He led a revolt against Rome

Josephus tells of a Theudas, a magician around 44 AD, who led a great band of adherents to the Jordan, promising to divide it for an easy passage of the river, but was caught and beheaded by the soldiers of the procurator Fadus [Josephus, Antiq. 20.5.1]. However, this event happened about 10 years after Gamaliel's speech (which was in 35 AD).

37 After this man, Judas of Galilee appeared in the days of the census and drew away *some* people after him; he also perished, and all those who followed him were scattered.

37 After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census and drew away *some* people after him; he too perished, and all those who followed him were scattered.

37 After that man, at the time of the census, Judas the Galilean appeared and got people to follow him. He, too, died, and all his followers were scattered.

37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.

- Gamaliel's second example was of Judas of Galilee (not Judas Iscariot; Judas was a common name in Israel in the first century)

- Unlike Theudas, we do have some extra-biblical information about Judas of Galilee (from Josephus)

- Josephus tells us that Judas of Galilee's rebellion was crushed by the Roman procurator Crispus Thaddus with 5000 horses, which resulted in the beheading of Judas

— This rebellion and defeat was the beginning stages of what is known as the Zealot Party (Judas is regarded as the founder), which was a political party/movement that eventually led to the revolt against Rome in 66-70 AD. They made their final stand against Rome at Masada in 73 AD.

— When Titus of Rome destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD, these zealots fled to Masada and took over the Roman fortress (former vacation home for Herod). When it appeared that they were going to lose the battle, they engaged in a mass suicide.

— In Masada today there is a synagogue and you can see on the pavement the final verses they were reading from before their suicide: Ezek 36-37

Judas the Galilean led an insurrection in days of the taxing under Quirinius in 6 AD. Quirinius had passed orders for two censuses. The first one was passed in 8 BC and is recorded in Luke 2:2. This first census brought Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, where Jesus was born. Quirinius passed a second enrollment law in 6 AD, when he became the Roman legate of Syria. It was the second decree that caused the revolt led by Judas of Galilee. But he also perished, and all that were with him were scattered.

38 And so in the present case, I say to you, stay away from these men and leave them alone, for if the source of this plan or movement is men, it will be overthrown;

38 So in the present case, I say to you, stay away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or action is of men, it will be overthrown;

38 "I'm telling you to keep away from these men for now. Leave them alone, because if this plan or movement is of human origin, it will fail.

38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:

- Gamaliel's advice was for the Sanhedrin/religious authorities to leave the apostles alone because he was confident that they would end up the same way Theudas and Judas of Galilee ended up...amounting to nothing

- The reason for Gamaliel's advice was that if this "movement" of the apostles and their followers were of men, like Theudas and Judas of Galilee, then it will fizzle out at some point and be overthrown/defeated

39 but if the source is God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God."

39 but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God."

39 However, if it's from God, you won't be able to stop them, and you may even discover that you are fighting against God!"

So they were convinced by him.

39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

- But if the source of this movement was God, the Sanhedrin/religious authorities would not be able to overthrow it anyway, and in addition, they would be fighting against God. They would be "kicking against the goads/pricks" (Cf. 26:14).

— The point of Gamaliel's speech is that movements typically do not outlast their founders; most movements die off after the leadership dies off

— If you're dealing with a movement that is being sustained and even growing after their founders are dead, you're dealing with something that God started, and if that's the case, you'd be foolish to fight against it anyway

*Some have taken Gamaliel's words and turned them into divine truth. However, Luke simply recorded what Gamaliel said without confirming the validity of the words. This was Gamaliel's personal opinion; it was not biblical truth. Many things that are not of God (such as false religion and cults) have prospered. One must be careful not to use someone's opinion as biblical truth. [Fruchtenbaum]*

**40** They followed his advice; and after calling the apostles in, **they flogged them** and **ordered them not to speak** in the name of Jesus, and *then* released them.

**40** They took his advice; and after calling the apostles in, they flogged them and ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and *then* released them.

**40** After calling in the apostles and beating them, they again ordered them to stop speaking in the name of Jesus and let them go.

**40** And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

- The Sanhedrin decided to follow Gamaliel's advice and release the apostles...

- "...they flogged them" - probably with 39 lashes (Deut 25:2-3; Acts 22:19; 2 Cor 11:24)

— The beating was for disobeying the Sanhedrin's former order to stop preaching (4:18)

— The Sanhedrin flogged the apostles because they had disobeyed the gag order given to them to not preach the name Jesus (Cf. 4:17-18)

— This is the first time in the Church Age that anyone had suffered physically for their faith

— It's likely that each of the disciples was given 39 lashes with a whip (40 minus 1) (Cf. Deut 25:2-3)

— Paul later suffered this same punishment on five different occasions (Cf. 2 Cor 11:24)

- "...ordered them not to speak" - they reconfirmed the gag order originally given in 4:17-18

41 So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been **consideredworthy** to suffer shame for *His* name.

41 So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for *His* name.

41 They left the Council, rejoicing to have been considered worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the Name.

41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

- A completely un-human-like reaction after just being beaten to within an inch of your life

- Similar to the reaction of Paul and Silas in Philippi (Cf. 16:22-25); this is how the Philippian jailer came to Christ: through the un-human-like reaction to punishment and suffering that Paul and Silas displayed

- Paul would later write the epistle to the Philippians, which is all about how to have joy in adverse circumstances

- "...considered worthy" - *kataxioō*, used only 3x in the NT (Luke 20:35; 2 Thess 1:5)

42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not stop **teaching** and **preaching** the good news of Jesus as the Christ.

42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

42 Every day in the Temple and from house to house they kept teaching and proclaiming that Jesus is the Messiah.

42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

- A result of the second persecution was renewed zeal, shown by the frequency they were teaching in the Temple and in the home

- "...teaching" - *didasko*, explaining

- "...preaching" - *euaggelizomai*, evangelizing

- All of this, and yet the apostles just go back to what they always do: preaching and teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ every single day in the temple and from house to house

- They go right back to civil disobedience; no planning session, no new strategy, just preaching and teaching Christ wherever they went

## Application

First, we should not mistakenly conclude that all suffering in the life of the believer emanates from divine discipline regarding personal sin. While sin can be a cause of suffering, it is not necessarily *the only* cause of such suffering. There are many scriptural

examples of individuals suffering for reasons unrelated to divine discipline over personal sin (Job 1:1; John 9:1-3; Gal 4:13; 2 Cor 12:7-10; 2 Tim 4:20; James 1:2-4).

Second, God desires practical holiness in His church. Because sin is spiritually contagious (Gal 5:9; 1 Cor 5:6), God sometimes deals with sin drastically so as to prevent it from spreading to the rest of God's people.

Third, the disciplining hand of the Lord is a reality in the life of the Christian. God loves us so much that He may sometimes introduce temporal pain into our lives when we sin. His goal is for us to associate this momentary pain with the sin so that we will be deterred from committing the same sin in the future. God, who understands the horrific consequences of sin (Gal 6:7-8), understands that we have the ability to destroy ourselves in sin. Thus, He may introduce momentary pain through discipline into our lives. The next time we think about sinning we will associate the momentary pain of discipline with sin and consequently avoid the sin altogether. Such avoidance of sin spares us from untold grief and long-term consequences.

Fourth, as Christians, we must understand that Satan seeks to influence our lives. By refusing to yield to the sin nature, we prevent Satan from having the influence over us that he desires. Had Ananias and Sapphira not yielded to the temptation of misrepresenting their level of generosity, Satan would have had no influence over them and this tragic episode could have been avoided. It is amazing to discover the things we can learn about God's character and how He works in our lives and churches from this short and sometimes overlooked story of Ananias and Sapphira.