

Acts 5:17-42, ARREST OF THE TWELVE: THEIR CHALLENGE TO THE SANHEDRIN

Context: Ananias and Sapphires have expired, suddenly! Great fear came upon the Church and the Jerusalem community. The Apostles continue to enjoy popular esteem, and under their preaching, teaching and healing, multitudes come to the Lord.

Wouldn't this make Jerusalem religious leaders happy? Just the opposite: they are filled with jealousy and arrest the Twelve!

Attitude of the Sanhedrin Leaders: Hostility

v. 17, "They were filled with (lit. "of") jealousy" ("indignation," KJV). The same jealousy that motivated this august body to condemn and arrest Jesus is now rekindled and directed toward the Twelve.

v. 18, They have the Twelve locked up overnight intending the next day to take more drastic steps than in the previous arrest (4:1-3)

Intervention by God & the Sanhedrin's Dilemma

v. 19-21a, An angel of the Lord (not "*the* angel") releases and directs them to teach the people in the Temple area. This was a sovereign, supernatural act of God; but He does not always intervene in this manner.

v. 21b, This is one of the best descriptions of the Sanhedrin in Scripture: it is the _____, the _____ of the children of Israel.

v. 24-26, Note how paranoid are the religious leaders and the Temple police.

v. 27, 28, What a testimony from an enemy of the Gospel to the effectiveness and focus of the teaching of the Apostles! "THE NAME OF JESUS" SO FAR IN ACTS: 2:21, 38; 3:6, 16; 4:7, 10, 12, 17, 18, 30; 5:28: IT IS USED 31 TIMES IN ACTS.

The Bold Defense of the Twelve

v. 29, Peter and the Eleven reply, "We _____ ($\delta\epsilon\iota$ / *dei*: necessity) due to the nature of things) obey God rather than man."

This was true biblical civil disobedience, not some antigovernment or antisocial whim.
They would not contradict verbally or in practice what the Word of God commanded.

v. 30-32, Though the 12 were in an explosive situation, Peter did not tone down his message. His reply is a model of his readiness, conciseness, and coherence. As in chapter 2, he contrasts the Sanhedrin's human viewpoint of Jesus to that of God's viewpoint.

v. 30a, "The God of our Jewish fathers raised Jesus up:" that is, the birth, the life, the ministry of Jesus is from God.

v. 30b, "YOU YOURSELVES slew (Aorist Middle Indicative)...

"YOU YOURSELVES slew by hanging Him on a tree (cross)," that is, by the most ignominious death known, as their own Scriptures state, "Cursed is everyone that is hanged on a tree." Compare Galatians 3:13, Deuteronomy 21:23; 1 Peter 2:24.

v. 31, but God has exalted This One (Jesus)

- 1) to (not "with" as KJV) His Right-hand: the place of _____, _____, _____;
- 2) as "Prince," that is, as Authoritative Leader, Ruler; as "Saviour," that is, the One who saves;
- 3) with the purpose of granting repentance to Israel; that is, change of mind about the person and work of Jesus, the Messiah;
- 4) and with the purpose of granting forgiveness of sins. Could God have forgiven sins any other way? If so, then Jesus died in vain!

v. 32 "Not only we ourselves are witnesses of these things, but so is God the Holy Spirit!"

Peter's message is short, coherent, on target, convicting!

Gamaliel & the Negative Reaction by Sanhedrin (their 2nd)

v. 33, Conviction brought rage instead of repentance; they seek to kill the twelve. To accomplish this, they need the support of the Pharisee's (rivals of the Sadducees).

v. 34-40, But Gamaliel's advice prevails:

v. 34, 35, "Do not do anything rash"

v. 36, 37, "God is Sovereign: two historical rebels who came to naught prove this: 1) Theudas (v. 36); and 2) Judas of Galilee (v. 37)."

v. 38, 39, "Let these men alone: God is sovereign." **BUT GAMALIEL MISSED A MAJOR ISSUE: JESUS CANNOT BE TREATED WITH INDIFFERENCE!**

v. 40, They beat the twelve, forbid them to speak in the name of Jesus, and release them.

Conclusion

v. 41, 42, The believers obey God rather than men: they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus the Christ EVERYWHERE!