

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

LESSON 8: CHAPTER 5:12-42

17 July 2015

A COMMENDABLE CHURCH

Vss. 12-14 The apostles worked many signs and wonders among the people. The believers stuck together (vs. 12). The unbelievers didn't dare join up with them (vs. 13) though they were impressed with the signs and miracles (vs. 13). Multitudes believed and were "**added to the Lord**" (vs. 14). In Acts 2:47 "**The Lord added to the church.**" These are interchangeable terms that prove the church existed before Paul was saved.

Lesson: if lost people are comfortable going to your church, God's not in it. A church should have the testimony "*This is Not the Place to go to Sin!*" And "*This is Not the Place for Dedicated Sinners to Socialize.*" "*Sinners Repent or Stay Out!*"

Vss. 15-16 The sick were brought out to the street so that Peter's shadow might overshadow them. Peter could cast a shadow because he was walking in the light (John 8:12). People are getting blessed because of Peter's relation to the Light (Jesus). People also came from neighboring cities and were all healed (no failures).

A COURAGEOUS WITNESS

Vss. 17-20 The high priest of the Sadducees heard the news and in extreme anger put the apostles in prison. The angel of the Lord released them from prison and told them to go to the temple and speak to the people "**all the words of this life.**" (John 1:4, 14:6, 19). Jesus said, "**Because I live, ye shall live also.**" He said, "**Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die**" (Jn. 11:26).

Vss. 21-26 The apostles begin teaching in the temple early in the morning. The religious rulers think they're still in prison. When they find out the prisoners aren't in there, they begin to realize the seriousness of this situation. Upon learning that the apostles were in the temple teaching, they brought them peacefully before the council. (They would have preferred to use violence, but feared that the people {multitudes of believers} might stone them).

Vss. 27-28 The high priest charges them with [1] insubordination: "We told you not to teach..." [2] Indoctrination (proselytizing) "You filled Jerusalem with your doctrine." [3] Libel "you're trying to bring the blood of Jesus on us." ("You're trying to make us look guilty.")

The answer to these accusations: [1] "We obey God, not you" (vs. 29). [2] "We're doing what God told us to do" (vs. 29, Acts 1:8). [3] "You brought the blood of Jesus on yourself" (Matt. 27:25). They don't realize that they NEED Jesus' blood on them!

Vss. 29-32 The apostles' response to the charges. Peter stresses the importance of obeying God (vs. 29, 32). "We're not accusing you falsely. You DID kill Jesus. God raised Him up" (vs.30). (Gospel). God exalted Him (ascension) "**to be a Prince and a Saviour**" (vs. 31). Notice he's not offering a Kingdom. He's offering a Saviour!

(Vs. 32) The apostles are witnesses of these things (death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ) "**and so is also the Holy Ghost.**" God gives the Holy Ghost to "**them that obey him.**" Repentance is required if you want your sins forgiven (vs. 31).

Vss. 33-38 The reaction to the Apostles' answer. "**They were cut to the heart**" (Heb. 4:12), and discussed killing them. They didn't respond like Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9) because they "**loved darkness rather than light**" (John 3:19).

A Pharisee named Dr. Gamaliel recommends they not kill them, but to just give "a little space" (vs. 34) and see if these followers of Jesus might fizzle out like the followers of Theudus (vs. 36) and Judas (vs. 37) did after they died. If this movement "be of men, it will come to naught" (vs. 38). If it be of God, we can't win against him (vs. 39).

Most commentators praise Gamaliel for this speech, saying that he showed great restraint and self-control, and had great respect for God.

Actually Gamaliel is a huge compromiser; he doesn't stand by what he believes. He clearly rejects Jesus Christ, yet he gives Jesus' followers space to indoctrinate the world. Saul of Tarsus was a student of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3) and he clearly did not follow this advice here (Acts 9:1, 22:4). He persecuted Christians fiercely.

Gamaliel insulted the Lord Jesus Christ (blasphemy). Peter said, "**We ought to OBEY God rather than men**" (vs. 29). He said God gave the Holy Ghost "**to them that OBEY him**" (vs. 32), speaking of Jesus. So Gamaliel responds by bringing up two troublemakers and pointing out "**As many as OBEYED him (Theudus) were brought to naught**" (vs. 36) and "**As many as OBEYED him (Judas) were dispersed**" (vs. 37). In effect, he's saying that Jesus is just another troublemaker that fools choose to obey. We don't need to worry about him.

Vss. 40-41 The other religious rulers agree with Gamaliel. The apostles were beaten, warned again not to speak in the name of Jesus, and released. They rejoiced that they were "**counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.**" Jesus had instructed them to do this in Matthew 5:11-12.

Vs. 42 The apostles ignored the command of the religious rulers and obeyed God. They taught in the temple every day. "**And in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.**"
