

# Acts 5 Commentary

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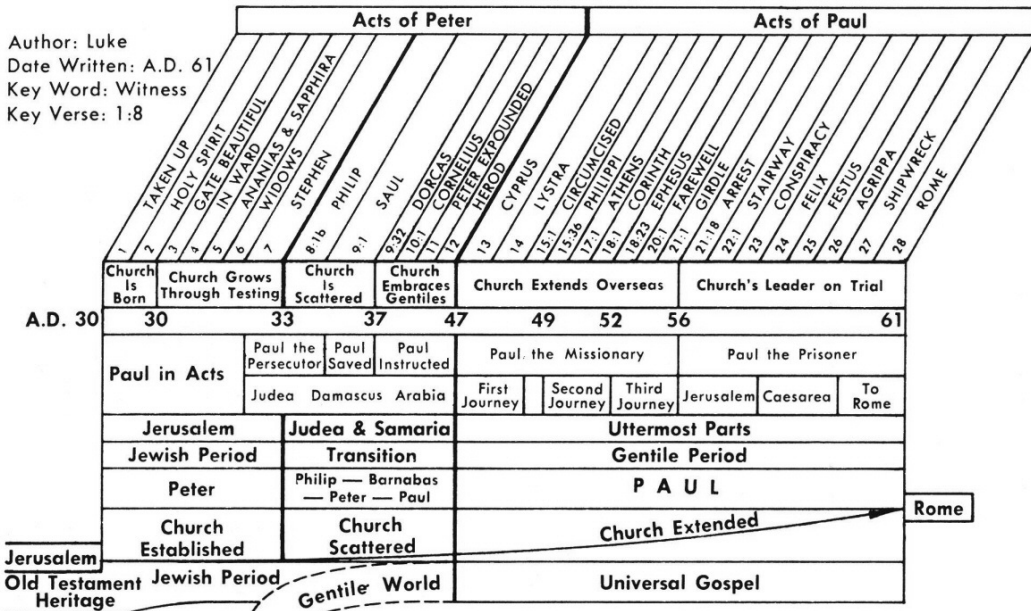
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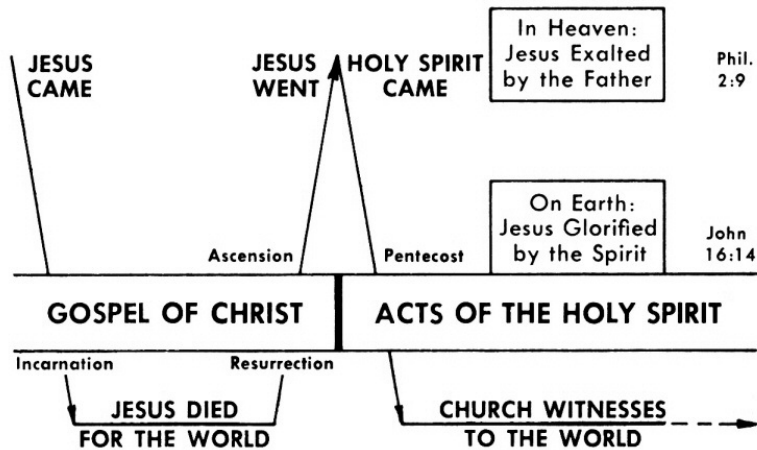
Author: Luke  
 Date Written: A.D. 61  
 Key Word: Witness  
 Key Verse: 1:8



Click chart to enlarge

Chart from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission

### THE EXPANDING WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT-EMPOWERED CHURCH



Click chart to enlarge

Acts 5:1 But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, ([NASB: Lockman](#))

KJV Acts 5:1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,

- Leviticus 10:1-3; Joshua 6:1; Mt 13:47,48; John 6:37; 2 Timothy 2:20
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### SHARING OF THE SAINTS VS SINS OF THE SAINTS

Recall that the Chapter breaks (and versification) are not inspired and here we encounter another example of a poor chapter break. The fact that this verse begins with a "but" should have been a clue that this is continuation of the story begun in Acts 4. In Acts 4 we see Satan use the Sanhedrin in an attempt to disrupt the work of the Church. But when he found that **outside** persecution did not work, but even fanned the flames of prayer and bold proclamation, he turned to inside perversion of the practice of giving. External assault on the apostles failed, so Satan simply shifted his strategy to **internal adulteration** of the saints. And while Satan still uses both external persecution and internal perversion, in America the latter strategy is by far the most common and sadly also the most successful.

As **Warren Wiersbe** says "We must face the fact that Satan is a clever foe. If he does not succeed as the "devouring lion" (1 Peter

5:8+), then he attacks again as the "deceiving serpent" or an "angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:3, 13-14). Satan is both a murderer and a liar (John 8:44), and the church must be prepared for both attacks. ([Wiersbe Commentary on Acts](#))

**But (de)** - This striking **term of contrast** begs the question, what is Luke contrasting? To answer this question we are almost always forced to examine the preceding context (context is king for accurate interpretation). In this case we find Luke's description of Barnabas is the relevant context...

Now Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means Son of Encouragement), 37 and who owned a tract of land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. (Acts 4:36-37).

So the clear and dramatic contrast is between two men who are "polar opposites," the positive example of Barnabas (Son of Encouragement) and the negative example of Ananias (Jehovah is Gracious). Barnabas lived up to his name, while Ananias did not live up to his name and died as a result! Barnabas is an example of sharing of the saints and Ananias and Sapphira an example of the sins of the saints. We see a stark contrast between a man filled with the Holy Spirit (Barnabas) and a couple filled with the unholy spirit. This deceptive duo desired the praise accorded Barnabas but were unwilling to pay the price he paid. Barnabas was guided by his generous spirit, while A&S were guided by selfish motives.

**Robertson** suggests a reason for the actions of Ananias and Sapphira - The praise of Joseph was too much for Ananias, but he was not willing to turn over all. He wanted praise for giving all and yet he took care of himself by keeping some. Thus he started the Ananias Club that gave a new meaning to his lovely name (God is gracious). (Word Pictures in the New Testament)

**A man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira** - Names in Scripture often convey something about the character of the person, but in this case, the names fail to do so. As noted **Ananias** means "Jehovah is Gracious" or "The Lord has favored" (cf Hebrew - ; In the Septuagint "Ananias" translates [chananyah](#) = "Lord is gracious" and also Ananiah [Neh 8:4] = "Lord protects"). **Sapphira** means beautiful. Perhaps to others Ananias appeared gracious and generous, but he would soon find out that God was holy! And Sapphira may have been beautiful on the exterior, but not on the interior for she was ugly with sin. Their names were "too good" for them! **Constable** adds that "Their names proved as ironic as their behavior was hypocritical!"

**Warren Wiersbe** - George MacDonald wrote, "Half of the misery in the world comes from trying to look, instead of trying to be, what one is not." The name that Jesus gave to this practice is "**hypocrisy**," which simply means "wearing a mask, playing the actor." We must not think that failure to reach our ideals is hypocrisy, because no believer lives up to all that he or she knows or has in the Lord. Hypocrisy is deliberate deception, trying to make people think we are more spiritual than we really are. ([Wiersbe Commentary on Acts](#))

The great sin of **Ananias and Sapphira** (A&S) was **hypocrisy**, which is a variation of lying. The hypocrite is a play-actor, pretending to be someone he is not.

**Hypocrisy** (Greek [hupokrisis](#)) describes a kind of deceit in which persons pretend to be different from what they really are, and especially like A&S that they are acting from good motives when in reality they were motivated by selfish desire for man's praise (like Barnabas). Jesus warned hypocrites, and in fact severely warned them (See Mt. 23:13, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27, 28, 29). Believers must strip off any semblance of hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is one of the sins that God hates above all others. A hypocrite has God on his tongue and the world in his heart.

The word **hypocrisy** comes from the Greek theater and referred to the practice of putting on a mask and playing a part on stage. It originally conveyed the idea of playing the playing a part on the stage and described the actor's art. The NT gives hupokrisis only a negative connotation referring to hypocrisy, duplicity (the quality of being double - belying of one's true intentions by deceptive words or action), insincerity, dissimulation (hiding under a false appearance; hiding or disguising one's thoughts or feelings - don't we all do this from time to time?!). The idea is to pretend, to act as something one is not and so to act deceitfully, pretending to manifest traits like piety and love. It means to create a public impression that is at odds with one's real purposes or motivations, and thus is characterized by play-acting, pretense or outward show. It means to give an impression of having certain purposes or motivations, while in reality having quite different ones.

**Wuest** adds that the Greek word "is made up of hupo**under**, and **krinō** "to judge" and referred originally to "one who judged from under the cover of a mask," thus, assuming an identity and a character which he was not. This person was the actor on the Greek stage, one who took the part of another. The Pharisees were religious actors, so to speak, in that they pretended to be on the outside, what they were not on the inside... Our word **hypocrite** to the act of concealing wrong feelings or character under the pretence of better ones. The true identity of the person is covered up. It refers to acts of impersonation or deception. Christianity

requires that believers should be open and above-board. They should be themselves. Their lives should be like an open book, easily read."

**Steven Cole** - Hypocrisy is always motivated by self-love. We want to impress others, to make them think that we are something that we know in our hearts we are not.

**Kent Hughes** - Dante portrayed hypocrites in the Eighth Circle of Hell wearing gilded capes that were beautiful to the eye but were actually made of lead, producing the burdened cry, "O weary mantle of eternity."

Beautiful as hypocrites may be in appearance, they carry debilitating weight throughout life, suppressing the life of the church....Peter confronted Ananias and Sapphira about their heart deception. Their story is a call to confront ourselves. Do I practice spiritual deceit? Do I attempt to make others think I am more committed than I am? These are serious questions. In the larger picture, it is a matter of life and death—maybe not our own, but someone else's—perhaps our children, our grandchildren, our relatives, our neighbors. Possibly God is calling us to confront another believer, as Peter did. Nathan did the same to King David: "You are the man!" (2 Samuel 12:7). We must help each other remain honest and obedient to God....we should take an honest look at our lives regarding deceit. Are we truthful people? Do we engage in exaggeration and coloring? Are we promoting spiritual deception about our own commitments. Are we trying outwardly or subtly to make ourselves appear to be what we are not? Perhaps, to acquire objectivity, it would be helpful to seek the perspective of another person—your spouse, if you are married, or perhaps a trusted, honest friend. (See [Acts: The Church Afire](#))

**Samuel Johnson** wrote "Accustom your children constantly to this [the telling of the truth]; if a thing happened at one window, and they, when relating it, say that it happened at another, do not let it pass, but instantly check them; you do not know where deviation from truth will end.... It is more from carelessness about truth than from intentional lying, that there is so much falsehood in the world."

A hypocrite has God on his tongue and the world in his heart.

A hypocrite is a person who isn't himself on Sunday.

Hypocrites are like pictures on canvas, they show fairest at farthest.

A clean glove often hides a dirty hand.

A hypocrite is a man who lets his light so shine before men that they can't tell what is going on behind!

When reputation becomes more important than character, we have become hypocrites.

Hypocrites are not those who live worse than they profess—that's all of us. Hypocrites are those who cannot see, or are not honest about the gap between their talk and their walk. Jerry Bridges

A hypocrite is not a person who fails to reach his desired spiritual goals, because all of us fail in one way or another. A hypocrite is a person who doesn't even try to reach any goals, but he makes people think that he has. His profession and his practice never meet. Warren Wiersbe

If we are living in sin ("walking in darkness"), then our lives will contradict what our lips are saying, making us hypocrites. Warren Wiersbe

The tragedy of hypocrisy is not only that God sends judgment, but that hypocrisy brings its own judgment. It destroys character; and when character is gone, when the salt has lost its flavor (see Matt. 5:13), what does a person have left? Warren Wiersbe

#### Related Resources:

- See multiple Quotes, Illustrations, Devotionals on Hypocrisy-Hypocrites
- [What does the Bible say about hypocrisy?](#)
- [Why did God kill Ananias and Sapphira for lying?](#)
- [Why are all Christians hypocrites? Are all Christians hypocrites?](#)
- [Matthew 6:1 Beware of Hypocrisy](#) - John MacArthur
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Hypocrisy](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Hypocrisy](#)
- Charles Buck Dictionary [Hypocrisy](#)
- Spurgeon's Illustration Collection [Hypocrisy](#) [Hypocrisy \(2\)](#) [Hypocrisy \(2\)](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Hypocrisy](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Hypocrisy](#) [Hypocrisy](#)

- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Hypocrisy](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Hypocrisy](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Hypocrisy](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Hypocrisy](#)

**H A Ironside** once said "I am a preacher of the Word-a glorious privilege-and if I have prayed once I have prayed a thousand times and said, 'Don't let me be able to preach unless in the power of the Holy Ghost.' I would rather be struck dumb than pretend it is in the power of the Spirit if it isn't; and yet it is so easy to pretend. It is so easy to come before men and take the place of an ambassador for God, and still want people to praise the preacher instead of giving the message only for the Lord Jesus."

**Sold a piece of property** - Recall from the previous chapter that members of the Body would sell property to provide support for those in need with the wonderful result that "**there was a not a needy person among them**" (Acts 4:34+). This practice was not mandatory, but reflected a freewill offering by those who were led to sell property.

**James Anderson** makes an interesting comment - We must not think that the first church was perfect; it was composed of humans like ourselves with all their failings, and they had a lot to learn from the apostles. Two successive chapters tell of problems in the church, and both were caused by money (Acts 6:1-2). (What the Bible teaches – Acts)

**Piece of property** (2933)(**ktema** from **ptaomai** = to possess, obtain) means any kind of acquired property or possessions. That which is owned or possessed. Something that a person has come into the possession of, usually property such as lands or houses.

In the Septuagint of Pr 12:27 **ktema** describes "the precious **possession** of a man" as "diligence." **Ktema** is used in the Lxx to translate vineyard (Pr 31:16, Hos 2:15).

**Ktema** - 4x in 4v - piece of property(1), property(3). - Matt. 19:22; Mk. 10:22; Acts 2:45; Acts 5:1.

There are 7 uses in the Septuagint - Job 20:29; Job 27:13; Prov. 12:27; Prov. 23:10; Prov. 31:16; Hos. 2:15; Joel 1:11

### Satan's Devices

General George Patton of World War II fame was seldom at a loss for words. What he said during a battle in North Africa may be legend, but it typifies the man. Patton's troops and tanks were engaged in a successful counterattack of German forces under General Erwin Rommel. Patton is reported to have shouted in the thick of the battle, "I read your book, Rommel! I read your book!" And that he did. In Rommel's book *Infantry Attacks*, the famed "Desert Fox" carefully detailed his military strategy. And Patton, having read it and knowing what to expect, planned his moves accordingly. Satan has authored no book. God, however, has exposed our enemy's tactics in His Holy Word. Here are but a few of his subtle strategies: Quote Scripture to lead us astray (Matt. 4:6). Afflict the body (2 Cor. 12:7). Pluck away the seed of the Word (Mark 4:15). Tempt by impure thoughts (1 Cor. 7:5). Tempt by pride (1 Tim. 3:6). Hinder through circumstances (1 Thess. 2:18). Seduce by pleasure (1 Tim. 5:11, 15). Severely buffet in a crisis (Luke 22:31). Tempt to hypocrisy and lying (Acts 5:3). The name Satan means adversary. He is also described as "the accuser of our brethren" (Rev. 12:10) and "a murderer from the beginning" and a liar (John 8:44). Study these passages and plan your defense. Be always on the alert. Submit to God and resist the devil. Victory can be yours, but first you must know your enemy so you can recognize his strategy. D.J.D., Our Daily Bread,

**Steven Cole** - A 12-year-old boy was waiting for his first orthodontist appointment and was a bit nervous. Apparently he wanted to impress the dentist. On the patient questionnaire, in the space marked "Hobbies," he had written, "Swimming and flossing" (Reader's Digest [8/94], p. 112). That's a humorous example of how we're all prone to hypocrisy. But spiritual hypocrisy is not humorous; it's a dangerous and deadly sin. The hypocrisy of professing Christians has served as an excuse for many to disregard the claims of Christ, saying, "The church is full of hypocrites." The hypocrisy of Christian leaders has caused many believers to stumble. While Jesus was tender with many notorious sinners, He used scathing language to denounce those guilty of religious hypocrisy. The story of Ananias and Sapphira warns us of the danger of the sin of hypocrisy. It was literally deadly for this couple. Someone has said that if God dealt with all hypocrites in the church as He dealt with this couple, our churches would become morgues! ([Acts 4-36-5-11 The Deadly Sin of Hypocrisy](#))

**Kent Hughes** on Acts 5:1-11 - This is an important but for some reason neglected text. **Spurgeon** in his sixty volumes of the Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit anthology *Twenty Centuries of Great Preaching* has no sermon on this text. Yet, it remains an immensely important passage of Scripture. Dr. Barnhouse, on the basis of this text, would never let his congregation sing the third stanza of "At Calvary:" "**Now I have giv'n to Jesus everything; now I gladly own him as my King**" "You see," he said, "if God acted in the same way today that he did in the fifth chapter of Acts, you'd have to have a morgue in the basement of every church

and a mortician on the pastoral staff." The truth is, we would not have a pastoral staff either! (See [Acts: The Church Afire](#))

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**J Vernon McGee** - It is obvious that they were imitating Barnabas. They saw that he got a certain amount of publicity, and they thought it would be nice if they could get that kind of publicity, too. They wanted it. I have found that there are people who will give in order to be noticed. I recall a meeting with businessmen in Pasadena when I was a pastor there. We were planning to start a youth organization, and we were asking these men to give donations for the founding of this movement. It was decided that donations would not be made public. I was informed that one of these men would contribute very little if he were not given the opportunity to speak out publicly to let everybody know how much he was giving. It is quite interesting that he contributed a small amount. After the meeting he confided in one of the men that he had intended to give about ten times that amount, but he had expected to be able to stand up or at least raise his hand to indicate how much he had given. You see pride is still in human nature today. That was the condition of Ananias and Sapphira....**I don't like to have people sing the song that talks about putting "my all" on the altar.** Unfortunately, that makes liars out of the people who are singing. We need to be very careful about the songs we sing. A vow to the Lord should never be made lightly.

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**Illustration:** A rather pompous-looking deacon was endeavoring to impress upon a class of boys the importance of living the Christian life. "Why do people call me a Christian?" the man asked. After a moment's pause, one youngster said, "Maybe it's because they don't know you."

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**Illustration:** One blistering hot day when they had guests for dinner, Mother asked 4-year old Johnny to return thanks. "But I don't know what to say!" the boy complained. "Oh, just say what you hear me say" his mother replied. Obediently the boy bowed his head and mumbled, "Oh Lord, why did I invite these people over on a hot day like this?"

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### Strategies of Satan with Believers

1. Annihilate the church or neutralize its witness from within (Acts 5:1-6).
2. Virulent persecution from without.
3. Smother its witness by according it great popularity.
4. Disturb the unity of the church by creating discord and division
5. Subversion of the church through apostasy and heresy (2 Peter 2:1-2).

Satan is No Myth, J. O. Sanders,

**Acts 5:2 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.**

KJV Acts 5:2 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.

- **and kept back some of the price for himself** Joshua 7:11,12; 2 Kings 5:21-25; Malachi 1:14; 3:8,9; John 12:6; 1 Timothy 6:10; 2 Peter 2:14,15
- **with his wife's full knowledge** Acts 5:9
- **he laid it at the apostles' feet** Acts 4:34,35,37; Mt 6:2,3; 23:5; Php 2:3
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **ANANIAS IN EFFECT WAS "SOUNDING A TRUMPET"**

One is reminded of Jesus' clear warning in Matthew regarding our attitude when we give...

"So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the **hypocrites** ([hupokrites](#)) do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men (PROBABLY A KEY MOTIVATOR FOR A&S). Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full (A&S HAD THE REWARD FOR ONLY A FEW SECONDS OR MINUTES AT MOST!). "But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, (Mt 6:2,3+)

In addressing the hypocritical religious leaders Jesus said

"But **they do all their deeds to be noticed by men**, for they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments. (Mt 23:5)

This was the problem with Ananias and Sapphira who contrived their deceptive scheme **to be noticed by men!** They gave the impression they gave all the proceeds to the Church.

**Rackham** - Like Judas, Ananias was covetous; and just as **greed of gain** lay at the bottom of most of the sins and failures (of many) in Acts (e.g., the sin of Simon Magus, the opposition of Elymas, of the Philippian 'masters' and the Ephesian silversmiths, the shortcomings of the Ephesian converts and the injustice of Felix) so Ananias *kept back part of the price.*"

The ultimate root of their sin of greed was pride, and remember the middle letter of "p**ri**de" is the "big **I**!" The praise of Barnabas incited their p**ri**de to seek similar adulation. Satan whispered in their ears "You are as spiritual as Barnabas. Just give a big offering, but make sure to keep enough for yourselves." Solomon describes God's attitude toward pride...

"The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; **Pride** and arrogance and the evil way and the perverted mouth, I hate. (Pr 8:13).

**Comment** - Note that here the "antidote" for pride is to cultivate a reverential, holy fear of the LORD God. As John said (speaking of Jesus) "He must increase, but I must decrease." (Jn 3:30+)

**Warren Wiersbe** - Daniel Defoe called pride "the first peer and president of hell." Indeed, it was pride that transformed Lucifer into Satan (Isa. 14:12-15+), and it was pride ("Ye shall be as God!") that caused our first parents to sin (Gen. 3:1-4+). Pride opens the door to every other sin, for once we are more concerned with our reputation than our character, there is no end to the things we will do just to make ourselves "look good" before others. ([Wiersbe Commentary on Acts](#))

**And kept back some of the price for himself** - This would have been no problem had they not pretended to give the entire sum from the sale. But when they pretended to give the apostles the total selling price, they proved themselves to be hypocrites who were boasting in their gift, even though they had deceptively withheld some of the sale proceeds. So A&S were not just lying and deceiving but were in effect robbing from God!

**Ananias and Sapphira** clearly did not know (or did not heed) the OT teachings on giving, for Solomon was very clear when he stated

The **sacrifice** of the wicked is an **abomination** (Heb = [toebah](#); Lxx = [bdelugma](#)) to the LORD, But the prayer of the upright is His delight. (Pr 15:8).

**Comment** - The word [bdelugma](#) gives us vivid picture of God's "opinion" regarding the offerings of the wicked. **Bdelugma** is derived from [bdelusso](#) which means to emit a foul odor, or to turn away from someone on account of the "stench". It describes a divine loathing or disgust. The root word is **bdeo** which means to stink. In sum, sacrifices like that of Ananias and Sapphira were foul, and were extremely disgusting and abhorrent to God! This is strong language but it shows what God thinks of the horrible sin of hypocrisy!

**Kept back** (3557) ([nosphizo](#) from **nósp**hi = apart, separated) means to set apart or separate for oneself. In Titus 2:10 it conveys the idea is stealing in small quantities or practicing petty theft. **Nosphizo** means to keep back or misappropriate something for one's self that which should or does belong to someone else. **Nosphizo** was found in secular Greek writings in reference to embezzlement of public treasures. It speaks of secretly appropriating and setting apart for one's self the property of another. In this case, this couple pretended to give it all to God and His needy people, but it was a lie.

This **verb** is very interesting and while only used 3 times in the NT (Acts 5:2,3, Titus 2:10+) it is used one time in the Septuagint. In Joshua 7:1 we read

But the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully in regard to the things under the **ban** (a vow or pledge under which property or persons devoted to pagan worship were destroyed), for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, **took some of the things** (Lxx = [nosphizo](#)) under the ban, therefore the anger of the LORD burned against the sons of Israel.

**Comment** - So just as Ananias and Sapphira had made a vow to give all of the sales proceeds to God, they, like Achan, broke their vow. And nothing like SIN IN THE CAMP (of CONGREGATION) will sap spiritual power from God's congregated people, be it an army like Joshua or an "army" like the Church! Little wonder the church in America lacks spiritual power in a society gone bonkers!

Keep in mind that Israel had just crossed into the promised land and defeated Jericho, which suggested they would easily conquer

the pagan tribes in the land God had promised they would possess. And so just as the birth of the Church in Acts marked God's doing a "new thing," the nation of Israel also was beginning anew (after 40 years of wilderness wandering), but sin crept into Israel through the covetousness of one man named Achan. And what was the impact of this one man's sin on the entire nation? It resulted in a devastating, unexpected defeat for Israel

So about three thousand men from the people went up there, but they fled from the men of Ai. 5 The men of Ai struck down about thirty-six of their men, and pursued them from the gate as far as Shebarim and struck them down on the descent, so the hearts of the people melted and became as water. (Joshua 7:4-5) (Read the full story in Joshua 7:10-26)

**F F Bruce** - "The story of Ananias is to the Book of Acts what the story of Achan is to the book of Joshua. In both narratives an act of deceit interrupts the victorious progress of the people of God."

The sin of one man affected the power of the entire nation. Satan (although his name is not mentioned in Joshua 7, the event has all the earmarks of his handiwork) had used the covetousness of one man (Achan) to bring about defeat of the entire nation. Similarly here in Acts 5 Satan sought to do the same with this infant church. But this time God's Spirit thwarted Satan's attempts to corrupt the Body of Christ and also to give a strong warning to any who might be tempted to carry out a similar deception.

#### Related Resources:

- [Who was Achan in the Bible?](#)
- [Why did God judge the sin of Achan so severely?](#)

**With his wife's full knowledge** - Literally "his wife also knowing it together with him." She was complicit. They were partners in this deception. They desire the praise of men for their generosity, without actually being remarkably generous. We call that hypocrisy.

**Horton** sadly nails us all (at least from time to time) with his comment that ""Once the love of money takes possession of a person, there is no evil that he cannot or will not do." (BORROW [Acts Commentary](#))

I agree with **F F Bruce** who suggests "There may indeed be the further implication that Ananias and Sapphira had vowed to give the whole proceeds of the sale to God, but then changed their mind and handed over only part."

**And bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet** - The early church brought their gifts and laid them at the apostles' feet (Acts 4:35, 36, 5:2). This is interesting because presumably this would be done in front of the other believers and would be noticed by them. Today giving is done less publicly and many pastors have no idea who gives what or how much (which I think is a great practice).

**Portion** is **meros** which has the basic meaning of a part in contrast to the whole. In mathematics **meros** describes fractions (they gave a "faction" of the proceeds). **Meros** describes the prodigal son who said to his father "Father give me the **share** (meros) of the estate that falls to me." (Lk 15:12) In Lk 24:42 the disciples gave the resurrected Jesus "a **piece** of broiled fish."

#### Acts 5:3 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?"

KJV Acts 5:3 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?

- **why has Satan filled your heart** Ge 3:13-17; 1 Kings 22:21,22; 1 Chr 21:1-3; Mt 4:3-11; 13:19; Luke 22:3; John 13:2,27; Eph 6:11-16; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8; Rev 12:9-11
- **to lie to the Holy Spirit** Acts 5:9; Job 22:13; Ps 94:7-9; Isa 29:15; Jer 23:24; Hosea 11:12
- **to keep back some of the price of the land** Nu 30:2; Dt 23:21; Pr 20:25; Eccl 5:4; Ro 2:21,22
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### FILLED WITH AN EVIL SPIRIT

Satan is a great counterfeiter and here seeks to contaminate and corrupt the church by causing Ananias to pretend to give the entire sum from the sale of their property. Satan was behind the hypocritical action and words (lies) of A&S.



This results in a most dramatic contrast between Ananias and Barnabas, Son of Encouragement, who Luke later describes as "a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord." (Acts 11:24) One man controlled by the Holy Spirit and the other man controlled by the unholy spirit. One might question whether Ananias and Sapphira were genuine believers, but most commentators agree that they were indeed born again (see comment below by MacArthur). How can a couple whose bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (cf Ro 8:9-11; 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19), make room for an evil spirit? John writes "You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He Who is in you (THE SPIRIT OF JESUS CHRIST) than he who is in the world." (1 John 4:4) So while I believe that Scripture does not support the premise that a true believer can be possessed by a demon, it is clear from this passage in Acts that a believer can be controlled by a demonic spirit. I believe that this occurred with Ananias and Sapphira. They became jealous or envious of Barnabas, but they did not want to give all their money to God. In order to "look good" before the saints they pretended to give all their money to God. They may have even initially vowed to give all the proceeds from their sale to God. We cannot be certain of what went on in their mind.

**MacArthur** on whether A&S were genuine believers (I agree with MacArthur) - It is best to see them as genuine Christians for several reasons. **First**, they were included in the "congregation of those who believed" in Acts 4:32. **Second**, they were involved with the Holy Spirit, thus indicating a relationship to Him. **Third**, if they were not Christians, what lesson about sin did this give to teach all the rest who were true believers? **Fourth**, Satan can become personally involved with believers (cf. Mt. 16:21-23; Eph 6:12; 1 Pe 5:8-9). **Finally**, death can be divine chastening for a believer (1 Cor 11:30-32; 1 Jn 5:16). (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Acts)

**Constable** - Rather than allowing the Holy Spirit to fill him (cf. Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31), Ananias had allowed Satan to control his heart. Ananias' sin was lying. He sought to deceive the Christians by trying to gain a reputation for greater generosity than he deserved. By deceiving the church, Ananias was also trying to deceive the Holy Spirit who indwelt the church. In attempting to deceive the Holy Spirit, he was trying to deceive God.

**But Peter said** - Another striking **contrast**. Ananias' offering which should have been a sweet aroma to God, is discerned by Spirit filled Peter to be an abomination to God. Peter saw through the lie and the attempt to deceive and thus he issues this strong rebuke. Can you imagine Ananias' shock at hearing Peter's words?

**Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit**- As discussed above, Satan clearly exerted control over this couple. Satan is the "father of lies" (Jn 8:44), and he shot "fiery missiles" of thoughts like "keep some of the money for yourselves" into the heart and mind of A&S. Sadly when these fiery missiles of temptation came flying in, A&S failed to take up the shield of faith to repel the tempting thoughts (cf Eph 6:16+). And so while Satan tempted them to sin, A&S carried out the sin against the Spirit. They were fully responsible. Beloved, don't ever use the old cliché "The devil made me do it!" He may tempt you but there is no Scripture that places the blame of a believer's sin on Satan! And remember what **Oliver Wendell Holmes** once said, "Sin has many tools, but a lie is the handle which fits them all."

We see similar "handiwork" of Satan in the Gospels in the son of perdition, Judas Iscariot...

John 13:2; 27 During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him...(13:27) After the morsel, Satan then entered into him (OF COURSE HERE JUDAS HAD NO RESIDENT HOLY SPIRIT SO IN EFFECT WAS DEMON POSSESSED WHICH IS DIFFERENT THAN WHAT HAPPENED HERE IN ACTS). Therefore Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly."

Luke 22:3+ And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve.

**Satan** (4567)(**satanas** transliterated from Hebrew **Satan** - see 07854 and Aramaic sātānā) literally means **Adversary**, the evil antagonist who offers opposition, hostility, resentment, etc. An enemy who that contends with, opposes, resists. An **adversary** is one who hates or opposes another person and tries to harm them or stop them from doing something because of hatred and malice. Satan is the **inveterate, implacable**, relentless, ruthless, remorseless, merciless, heartless, pitiless, cruel, hard, harsh, hardened, incorrigible, dedicated enemy of God and His Church, the Body of Christ. **John Stott** points out that Satan's activity was behind all the opposition in Acts 3-6 (Message of Acts).

**Horton** on **why has Satan filled your heart** - The question "Why?" draws attention to the fact that their action was voluntary; there was no excuse for what they did. Before they sold it, it remained theirs, and they were under no compulsion to sell it. After they sold it, it was still "at [their] disposal" (in their power or authority). There was nothing compelling them to give it all (cf. 2 Cor. 9:7, "God loves a cheerful giver"—one who is glad to give, delights to give). What Ananias had conceived in his heart was a lie, "not... to men but to God." (BORROW [Acts Commentary](#))

**NET Note** - This is a good example of the Greek verb fill (**pleroo**) meaning "to exercise control over someone's thought and action" (cf. Eph 5:18+).

**Filled** (4137) ([pleroo](#)) literally describes something as filled to the brim, but figuratively as in this passage, describes that which controls the one who is filled. In other words, what fills a person, controls that individual. In this case an evil spirit (Satan) filled and controlled Ananias (and Sapphira). This same verb is used in Acts 13:52 to describe the disciples as "continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit." In Ephesians 5:18+ Paul commands believers to be continually filled with (controlled by) the Holy Spirit. The related verb ([pimplemi](#)) was used by Luke in the previous chapter to describe the filling of all the believers, this filling by the Spirit, a filling which resulted in boldness to speak the Word of God (Acts 4:31+). In Acts 4:8+ Peter was **filled** ([pimplemi](#)) with the Holy Spirit and empowered to boldly speak out to the antagonistic Sanhedrin.

**Constable - Lying to the Holy Spirit is a sin that Christians commit frequently today.** When Christians act hypocritically by pretending a devotion that is not theirs, or a surrender of life they have not really made, they lie to the Holy Spirit. If God acted today as He did in the early Jerusalem church, undertakers would have much more work than they do. (Bolding added)

**To lie** (5574) ([pseudomai](#) from **pseudo** = to cheat, defraud, falsify) means to communicate what is false, with the evident purpose of misleading. The Greek term and the English equivalent 'to lie' involve more than simply telling what is not true, for this could occur without an intent to deceive or mislead. It means means to tell a falsehood, attempt to deceive by lying, to speak falsely or deceitfully. **Pseúdomai** therefore indicates that Ananias not only communicated a falsehood but did so with the intent to deceive the apostles and the believers.

**To the Holy Spirit** - Note that clearly the **Holy Spirit** is a Person, because you can't lie to an "it." The irony of this is that the Spirit was the Spirit of Truth Who Jesus had given to guide the disciples in truth...

"But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come." (Jn 16:13)

**And to keep back** (see [nosphizo above](#)) **some of the price of the land?** - Ananias pretended to give all of the proceeds from the sale and the Holy Spirit revealed that fact to Peter. This statement by Peter indicates that he knew (presumably the Spirit revealed this information) what the total price of the land was and that Ananias had only brought a portion.

**Horton** - They could have submitted to God and resisted Satan (James 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:8-9). But they let pride, self, and the love of money possess them. The love of money is "a root of all kinds of evil" (1 Tim. 6:10; cf. Heb. 13:5). That is, once the love of money takes possession of a person, there is no evil that he cannot or will not do. With the love of money in control, a person will do things he never would do otherwise, including murder and every other sin. It is clear also that if a person is filled with the love of money he cannot love God (Matt. 6:24). (BORROW [Acts Commentary](#))

Paul warns the church at Ephesus of this same satanic strategy later in Acts...

"**Be on guard** ([present imperative](#) = continually guard - the only way to obey is to be continually filled with the Spirit) for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 "Therefore **be on the alert** ([present imperative](#) = continually be alert - the only way to obey is to be continually filled with the Spirit), remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. (Acts 20:28-31+).

**Wiersbe** - It is easy for us to condemn Ananias and Sapphira for their dishonesty, but we need to examine our own lives to see if our profession is backed up by our practice. Do we really mean everything we pray about in public? Do we sing the hymns and Gospel songs sincerely or routinely? "These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me" (Matt. 15:8, NIV). If God killed "religious deceivers" today, how many church members would be left? ([Wiersbe Commentary on Acts in Pdf](#) ).

**Guzik** writes - According to Calvin, these are the "evils packed under" the sin of Ananias, beyond the mere attempt to deceive God and the church:

- The contempt of God
- Sacrilegious defrauding
- Perverse vanity and ambition
- Lack of faith (**Ed Comment:** keeping back part of the money says "We don't trust God to supply our needs.")
- The corrupting of a good and holy order
- Hypocrisy

**Things we can do against the Holy Spirit:**

- Grieve the Spirit (Eph 4:30)
- Quench the Spirit (1 Th 5:19)
- Lie to the Spirit (Acts 5:3,4)
- Test/Tempt the Spirit (Acts 5:9)
- Resist the Spirit (Acts 7:51)

**Acts 5:4 "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."**

KJV Acts 5:4 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.

- **did it not remain your own** Ex 35:21,22,29; 1 Chr 29:3,5,9,17; 1 Cor 8:8; 9:5-17; Phile 1:14
- **Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart** Acts 8:21,22; Josh 7:25,26; Job 15:35; Ps 7:14; Isa 59:4; Ezek 38:10; Jas 1:15
- **You have not lied to men but to God** Acts 5:3; Ex 16:8; Nu 16:11; 1 Sa 8:7; 2 Ki 5:25-27; Ps 139:4; Luke 10:16; 1 Th 4:8
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SECRET SIN ON EARTH IS OPEN SCANDAL IN HEAVEN

**While it remained *unsold*, did it not remain your own?** - The answer is **yes** it belonged to Ananias and he could do with it whatever he wished.

**And after it was sold, was it not under your control?**- The question is whether the money from the sale was now at the disposal of Ananias. And the answer again is affirmative. The money was now his to give away. In other words he was under no compulsion to give it all away and he could have kept part for himself. That was not the problem.

**Control** (1849) (**exousia**) means in essence the right and the might. It conveys the idea that Ananias and Sapphira had the power of decision making, the freedom of choice and the right to act or decide what to do with their property.

**Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart?**- This was not a sin of omission but of commission! It was pre-meditated and planned out by A&S! More literally this reads "Why have you placed in your heart this deed?" Yes, Satan controlled him, but Ananias still had to commit the sin himself. Satan can influence but he cannot commit the sin for us. The verb conceived (literally "placed") is in the middle voice, indicating that Ananias had initiated the action and participated in the carrying out of the deed. Again, the point is he was not forced. Thus he was responsible for his deed.

### Related Resources:

- [What is a sin of omission?](#)
- [What is a sin of commission?](#)
- [How bad can a Christian sin?](#)
- [What is the sin unto death?](#)
- [How does my personal, private sin affect others?](#)

**Deed** (affair, matter, case) (4229) (**pragma**) simply means that which is done. It is something that people do or cause to happen. Pragma can speak of an obligatory activity to be done. In the present context this conniving couple falsely reasoned that it would be pragmatic to give enough from the sale to "look good" to the saints (like Barnabas) but to keep back enough to make sure they had enough to support their lifestyle. Pragmatic means they were advocating behavior that was dictated more by practical personal concerns than by devotion to the Lord.

**You have not lied to men but to God**- In Acts 5:3 asks why he lied to the **Holy Spirit**, so clearly the Spirit is **God**. He is not an "it," but a He, the Third Person of the Godhead. But they also lied to men (Peter, et al), so how is it that they lied to God? In effect what A&S were seeking to do was impress all who witnessed this donation with its **ostensibly magnanimous** (noble and generous) character. But it was a **sham**, a **dissimulation**, a **ruse**, a **deception**. Had the Holy Spirit not given Peter supernatural discernment of the heart of Ananias, all would have been praising this coupe for their wonderful gift to help the needs of the body.

**Wiersbe** - If we are lying to the Spirit (Acts 5:3), grieving the Spirit (Eph. 4:30) or quenching the Spirit (1 Th 5:19), He will not assist

us; but if we are walking in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16), He will not fail us. ([Wiersbe Commentary on Acts in Pdf](#))

**Life Application Bible Commentary** - The church has always attracted people with impure motives: hucksters who want to profit financially from religion, power mongers seeking control, the self-centered who want to be pampered and cared for, and glory seekers who want to be noticed and affirmed for their "holy" acts.

**Steven Cole** - We need to be clear on the exact nature of the sin of Ananias and Sapphira. Their sin was not that they had sold their property and had given only a part to the church. In fact, Peter makes plain (Acts 5:4) that it would not have been a sin for them to have sold their property and not given anything to the church. Their sin was that they conspired together to deceive the apostles and the church into thinking that they were giving the entire amount, when in fact they kept back a portion for themselves. In other words, they were trying to impress everyone with a higher level of spirituality and commitment than they really had. Have you ever done that? I hope you do not say "no," or we might need to have a sudden funeral this afternoon! We've all been guilty of trying to impress others with our commitment and devotion to Christ, even though we know in our heart that we are exaggerating. A pastor had been preaching on the importance of daily Bible reading. He and his wife were invited over to a parishioner's home for dinner. His wife saw a note on the kitchen calendar: "Pastor/Mrs. for dinner—Dust all Bibles" (Reader's Digest [3/90], p. 129)...Jesus always hit hypocrisy hard. In Matthew 23, He pronounced many woes on the scribes and Pharisees, whom He repeatedly called hypocrites. He warned His disciples, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" (Luke 12:1). Like leaven, hypocrisy starts small and unnoticed. It doesn't seem to be a big deal. But if it is not quickly checked, it spreads. It deceives the person into thinking that things are right between him and God, when in reality, things are very wrong. The leaven of hypocrisy can soon infect an entire church. The church at Laodicea thought that things were going well. They said, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing." But the Lord's perspective was, "You do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked" (Rev. 3:17+)!...When a prominent Christian is shown to be a hypocrite, the world heaves a sigh of relief, thinking, "Christians are really no different than anyone else. If they're phonies, then Christianity must not be true." ([Acts 4-36-5-11 The Deadly Sin of Hypocrisy](#))

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**Hypocrites Appear After Revivals** - C. H. Spurgeon. - Acts 5:1-11 - After a refreshing shower which has made all the flowers to smile till the teardrops of joy stand in their eyes, you will see your garden-paths spotted over with slugs and snails. These creatures lay concealed till the genial rain called them forth to make their slimy way towards, whatsoever they might devour. After this fashion revivals, of necessity, develop hypocrites; yet who would deplore the shower because of the snails, and who would rail at "times of refreshing" because mere pretenders are excited to make a base profession of a grace to which they are strangers?

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**ILLUSTRATION** - In a room glazed with yellow glass the photographer would get heat and light from the sunshine, but he could not produce a photograph because yellow glass, while it lets in the light and heat of the sun, keeps out the chemical or actinic ray necessary to produce a portrait. And so it is true of many that, while they live in the free light and warmth of the gospel day, while the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world shines upon and all round them, they are not savingly changed, they are not transformed by the light into the image of God. So in the case of Gehazi, Judas, and Ananias, covetousness prevented the shining of the example of those around from converting and blessing the heart.

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**Fraudulent Benevolence** - Christians say that they will give a tenth of their incomes, or more, to the work of Christ; and then comes a hard year of tightening in the market. They now think to themselves with a sweet caution, "I must retrench in benevolence this season." Sometimes Christians make a show of contribution, but adroitly manage to get back a fair percentage.

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**ILLUSTRATION** - An ingenious attempt to defraud was detected at the United States Mint recently. A package purporting to contain gold grains was delivered there by express from Little Rock. The general appearance of the grains was much like that daily received, and they also bore successfully the acid test. Subsequently a careful analysis was made to ascertain what the article really was and of what it was composed. The result was astonishing, revealing an ingenious device for the deception of parties dealing in gold bullion. The grains were found to be nothing more nor less than steel filings, and to give them the appearance of grains of the precious metal they were covered with fine gold, which was made to adhere by the use of a composition of turpentine. The Church and the world are often similarly imposed upon. Hypocrites are often able to pick up a coating of cant phrases and wear a sanctimonious appearance who are really base metal. Though the deception may succeed here, and for a time, ultimate detection is inevitable.

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### **The Retribution of Falsehood**

George Eliot, in "Romola," powerfully illustrates in that remarkable book the embarrassments involved in one cowardly departure from truth. In the chapter headed "Tito's Dilemma," the occasion arises for Tito to fabricate an ingenious lie. Many chapters on we find him experiencing the inexorable law of human souls that we prepare ourselves for sudden deeds by the reiterated choice of

good or evil that gradually determines character, and it becomes a question whether all the resources of lying will save him from being crushed. At another time we read: "Tito felt more and more confidence as he went on; the lie was not so difficult when it was once begun, and as the words fell easily from his lips, they gave him a sense of power such as men feel when they have begun a muscular feat successfully." The penalty is enforced a few pages later. "But he had borrowed from the terrible usurer Falsehood, and the loan had mounted and mounted with the years, till he belonged to the usurer, body and soul."

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### **Satan's Worms of Avarice - Christian Herald**

A journal devoted to the interests of horticulture states that a gardener in the employ of a gentleman at Pittsford, New York, has recently solved a problem which has long perplexed him. In the garden under his care is a large lawn, on which he has bestowed much labour, and which was his especial pride. For some time past a small patch on this lawn disfigured it, for the grass that grew there was poor and withered, in marked contrast to all around. For a long time the gardener vainly endeavoured to discover the cause of its decay. One day, as he stood meditatively gazing at it, he saw several birds settle upon it and thrust their beaks through the sod with much diligence and satisfaction. The gardener had the curiosity to turn up a portion of the punctured turf, and discovered, to his amazement, that the earth beneath was alive with a greedy multitude of large white grubs, which had completely consumed the roots of the grass. He continued the work, and at every fresh removal of the sod the same phenomenon presented itself, until quarts of the larvae were gathered and destroyed. It is to be feared that the lack of vigorous life in some portions of Christ's vineyard, the Church, may have a similar cause. The root of the piety of the members is being destroyed by Satan's worms of avarice, ambition, and love of pleasure.

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### **Complete Honesty**

Read: Acts 5:1-11

Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God. —Acts 5:4

Ask the friends and families of six people buried in a collapsed subway tunnel about complete honesty. Their loved ones' rescue was delayed for hours when the contractor didn't report the disaster to the authorities immediately. Instead, the company sealed the site and confiscated cell phones. It wasn't an outright lie, but it was a cover-up. This dishonest act showed disregard for life.

In the book of Acts, God gave us a sobering example of how He views dishonesty (4:32–5:11). Some believers had sold their land and shared all the proceeds with the church. Ananias and Sapphira decided to do likewise. But the couple kept some money back despite declaring that they had given the whole amount. Expecting commendation, they were struck dead instead.

Was their punishment too harsh? After all, their "slight" lie wasn't life-threatening. "Whoever falsely boasts of giving is like clouds and wind without rain," warns Proverbs 25:14. The apostle Peter asked Ananias, "Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?" (Acts 5:3), adding, "You have not lied to men, but to God" (v.4).

If we are completely honest with ourselves, can we say that we are completely honest before God

Lord, by Your Spirit grant that we  
In word and deed may honest be;  
All falsehood we would cast aside—  
From You, O Lord, we cannot hide. —D. De Haan

There are no degrees of honesty.

By Albert Lee ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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### **Servant Or Master?**

Read: Proverbs 30:5-9

No servant can serve two masters . . . You cannot serve God and mammon. —Luke 16:13

An Illinois resident asked his employer for a two-thirds pay cut in order to put his income below the poverty level. He reasoned that by making himself poor he would not have to pay income tax, and therefore he would not have to support military policies he didn't agree with. This would make him more consistent in practicing his beliefs. A close friend commented, "He has a strong commitment to justice and peace, and I think this is his way of carrying that out."

I'm not suggesting that we should follow his example, but he is a person who doesn't want money to divert him from his ideals. He reminds me of Agur, the wise author of Proverbs 30, who expressed concern that too much or too little wealth can get in the way of

commitment to God.

So we are left to consider it—money. The Illinois resident gave up part of it. Agur didn't want too much or too little of it (Proverbs 30:7-9). Jesus used it (John 13:29). Paul could take it or leave it (Philippians 4:11-12). The rich young ruler clung to it (Luke 18:23).

**Ananias and Sapphira died because they lied to God** about it (Acts 5).

What about our relationship to money? Do we use it wisely or does it control us? Is it our servant or our master? We cannot serve both God and money (Luke 16:13).

If money is your highest goal,  
The thing you long to gain,  
Its power will enslave your soul  
And cause your life much pain. —DJD

Money is a good servant, but a poor master.

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### **Which Tire Was It?**

Read: Acts 5:1-11

You have not lied to men but to God. —Acts 5:4

One sunny day, four high school boys couldn't resist the temptation to skip classes. The next morning they explained to their teacher that they had missed her class because their car had a flat tire. To their relief, she smiled and said, "Well, you missed a quiz yesterday." But then she added, "Take your seats and get out a pencil and paper. The first question is: Which tire was flat?"

No one gets away with lying. In Acts 5, Ananias and Sapphira thought they were lying only to Peter and the other believers. But the apostle said to them, "You have not lied to men but to God" (v.4).

Truth is one of the attributes of God. So when we tell a lie, we offend Him. And sooner or later He will uncover every falsehood—if not in this life, then at the final judgment, when we each give an account of ourselves to God (Romans 14:10-12).

We live in a highly competitive world, and sometimes we may be strongly tempted to shade the truth to get ahead. But the short-term gains from lying are worth little compared with the long-term benefits of telling the truth.

If you have deceived someone, confess it to that person and to the Lord. It may be humbling, but it's the first step to restoring integrity in your life.

The road that leads to misery  
Is caused by a tongue that wags;  
Beware of lying lips, my friend,  
And a mouth that boasts and brags.  
—Shade

If you always tell the truth, you will never be trapped in a lie.

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### **Closing The Gaps**

Read: Acts 5:1-11

Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God. —Acts 5:4

After the final episode of the 2002 TV program Survivor: Africa, a wrap-up special focused on the final contestants. The show's host Jeff Probst said that the victor won "mostly by sticking with his principles." The champion later explained that he wanted to win while retaining "dignity and self-respect." He elaborated that you don't have to lie, cheat, or do underhanded things to win. You can be competitive, yet still be truthful and nice. In short, he permitted no discrepancy between image and reality.

In the book of Acts we read about Ananias and Sapphira, who did have a gap between what they wanted to be known for and who they really were (5:1-11). Satan filled their hearts with a deceptive plan. They sold a piece of property and brought just a portion of

the money to the apostles, while pretending they were giving all the proceeds. They wanted to be recognized as a generous couple, but they were not what they appeared to be. This gap caused them to lie to the Holy Spirit and to the faith community. They paid a terrible price—death. Their example stands as a stark warning to us all.

What discrepancies have we permitted in our lives? We must confess them and close the gaps.

Lord, by Your Spirit grant that we  
May live with such integrity  
That when we simply give our word  
No one will doubt what has been heard.

—D. De Haan

Integrity means never having to look over your shoulder.

By Marvin Williams ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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There is one major thrust in all biblical references to hypocrisy; it is a warning. No matter in what context it is found, the practice is always condemned.

[Paul Apple's](#) summary of Jesus' teaching on hypocrisy...

- Giving to the poor to be recognized by others (Matthew 6:2)
- Praying in public to be recognized as "God's man" (Matthew 6:5, 23:14)
- Letting everybody know you are fasting to get recognition by others (Matthew 6:16)
- Complaining about other's behavior when yours is even worse. (Matthew 7:5, Luke 6:42)
- Pretending to honor God through lip service only (Matthew 15:7-9, Mark 7:6)
- Testing other people to try to make yourself look superior (Matthew 22:18, Mark 12:15)
- Deceiving people from knowing God (Matthew 23:13)
- Repressing the poor and widows (Matthew 23:14)
- Teaching proselytes to be hypocrites (Matthew 23:15)
- Tithing (giving to the church), but neglecting justice and mercy (Matthew 23:23)
- Doing everything for show, while really being self-indulgent and unrighteous (Matthew 23:25, 27, 28, 29, 34)
- Treating stock animals better than fellow human beings (Luke 13:15)
- Being able to analyze the weather, but unable to distinguish between right and wrong (Luke 12:56-57)

#### 6 Lessons we learn here about Spiritual Hypocrisy:

- Spiritual Hypocrisy is energized by Satan
  - Spiritual Hypocrisy is a matter of the Heart
  - Spiritual Hypocrisy never fools God
  - Spiritual Hypocrisy is always connected with other sins – Here: Greed, covetousness, envy
  - Spiritual Hypocrisy is intentional
  - Spiritual Hypocrisy is a serious offense
- 

**Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.** - Achan, Belshazzar, and Ananias, met the same fate, because of their persistent use of devoted things. When once we have devoted aught to God, He counts it as his own, and strikes down the hand that would abase it to common and profane use. The Lord our God is a jealous God; He will brook no perversion of his rights. Beware that you take back nothing which you have laid on God's altar, least of all yourself. Each gathering of believers is endowed with mystic and extraordinary importance, because the Lord, through the Eternal Spirit, is literally present. The true President is not the minister, however distinguished by his gift or grace, but the Divine Spirit Himself; and any sin against the Church is really against Him. It is this Divine presence that invests a gathering of the simplest, humblest believers with such unique importance. It is this which gives them the mysterious binding and loosing power, which is recognized and ratified in heaven. Behind Peter was the real Head of the Church; and so with every faithful minister. Honor the Personality, the Presidency, and Deity of the Holy Spirit, as set forth in this narrative.

Dr. Gordon told me on one occasion that he had in his church a man who, like a very crooked stick, obstructed all its work. He spoke to him alone, and before his brethren; but to no purpose. Then he bethought himself; and remembered that not himself, nor his church officials, was the true Head of the Church, but Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. He therefore handed the whole matter over to the Divine Spirit, as the Executive of the Godhead. In a fortnight this man had left the city, and necessarily ceased the

obstruction in which he had persisted.

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

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

- **And as he heard these words** Acts 5:10,11; 13:11; Nu 16:26-33; 2 Kings 1:10-14; 2:24; Jer 5:14; 1 Cor 4:21; 2 Cor 10:2-6; 13:2,10; Rev 11:5
- **great fear came over all who heard of it.** Acts 5:11,13; 2:43; Lev 10:3; Nu 16:34; 17:12,13; Dt 13:11; 21:21; Josh 22:20; 1 Sa 6:19-21; 1 Chr 13:12; 15:13; Ps 64:9; 119:120; 2 Cor 7:11; Rev 11:13
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DISSIMULATION A DEADLY DECEPTION

**Vance Havner** - If God dealt with people today as he did in the days of Ananias and Sapphira, every church would need a morgue in the basement.

**John Calvin** - God cannot stand unfaithfulness, and pretending to be holy is contemptible mockery.

**J Vernon McGee** - If those who lied to God in our churches were to drop down dead, we would have a lot of funerals. The undertakers would be doing a land-office business.

**Guzik** - Because his sin was lusting after public praise for his generosity, it was appropriate that the sin be exposed publicly. "It is a good general rule that secret sins should be dealt with secretly, private sins privately, and only public sins publicly." (Stott)

**And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last** - The physical cause of his death is unknown and not important. What is important is to see this as the judgment of God! Ananias laid down the deceptive donation, but God laid down Ananias because of his deception. His death was not delayed, but was immediate.

**Paul Apple** quips "Talk about being slain in the Spirit – not your holy laughter and rolling in the aisles type of experience here." I would add it is more like they were slain BY the Spirit, then IN the Spirit!

As **G Campbell Morgan** noted "'Observe that Peter said no word to Ananias about his death. The sentence was not calling down upon a man of a curse at the caprice of an ecclesiastical official. The death of Ananias was the act of God."

## **We lose the approval of God when we seek the applause of men.**

**Gotquestions** comments - Right away, in the church's infancy, God made it plain that hypocrisy and [dissimulation](#) were not going to be tolerated, and His judgment of Ananias and Sapphira helped guard the church against future pretense. God laid the bodies of Ananias and Sapphira in the path of every hypocrite who would seek to enter the church. ([Why did God kill Ananias and Sapphira for lying?](#))

**Constable** points out that "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 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 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. 1 Pet. 4:17)."

**Ray Stedman** applies this section to real life in the church -That is what this story of Ananias and Sapphira underscores for us. The minute they pretended to be something they were not -- death! When we come to church we put on a mask of adequacy, but inside we are inadequate, and we know it. We are struggling with problems in our homes, but we don't want to tell anyone about them. We can't get along with our children, but we'll never admit it to anyone. The pride that doesn't want anyone else to know what is going on between husbands and wives, and between parents and children, keeps us from sharing. We come to service, and put on a mask that says everything's fine! Everything's wonderful! Somebody asks us how are things going. "Great, great! Fine!" "How's



everything at home?" "Oh, wonderful! We're having a wonderful time!" The minute we say that and its not true, we die. Death sets in. Soon that death pervades the whole church. That is why dishonesty is the primary characteristic of the church today. ([Body Life](#))

**Bob Utley** on **breathed his last** (gave up the ghost - KJV) - In the ancient world one's last breath was evidence that the spirit of the person had left (cf. Jgds. 4:2; Ezek. 21:7 in the LXX). This rare term is found in the NT only in Acts (cf. 5:4, 10; 12:23). This is an example of temporal judgment. This is similar to God's judgment on Aaron's sons in Lev. 10. Sin is serious to God. It cost a life (cf. 2 Kgs. 14:6; Ezek. 18:4, 20).

**Breathed his last** (1634)(ekpsucho from **ek** = out + **psuche** = the soul or **psucho** = to breathe) means to expire, to breathe out and so to die. **Vine** says "to breathe out the soul (or life), to give up the ghost." This verb is used three times to describe three deaths each one because of their sin against God! -- Anania (Acts 5:5), Sapphira (Acts 5:10) and Herod who was struck by an angel of the Lord after receiving plaudits from the people that he was a god (Acts 12:23). Ekpsucho is used in the Septuagint to describe **Sisera's death** when **Jael** drove a tent peg through his head (Judges 4:21+) Hippocrates used **ekpsucho** as a medical term. Given the notoriety associated with ekpsucho, it is not surprising that Luke used a different verb (expneo) in Luke 23+ to describe Jesus breathing His last.

There is a message here for all of us and that is **we had better be careful not to presume upon the lovingkindness or longsuffering of God** when we wantonly sin against Him. Paul describes the results of some in Corinth who had taken Communion without confessing and repenting of their sins...

For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. 30 For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. 31 But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world. (1 Cor 11:29-32)

**Comment** - Have you ever heard the pastor warn you not to take communion by explaining you might become sick or die if you eat or drink in an unworthy manner? In all my years (34 years as a believer) I have never heard a pastor emphasize this warning prior to serving the Lord's Supper! Could it be that some of the sheep in the flock are sick because of failure to heed this warning? Just a thought to ponder!

The apostle John also gives a warning regarding sin in believers...

If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this. (1 Jn 5:16+)

**Comment** - I have personally known of at least two situations where believers (both pastors) were taken home because of persistent unconfessed, unrepentant sin.

**Gotquestions** comments - Of all the interpretations out there, none seem to answer all the questions concerning this verse. The best interpretation may be found by comparing this verse to what happened to Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-10 (see also 1 Corinthians 11:30). The "sin unto death" is willful, continuous, unrepentant sin. God has called His children to holiness (1 Peter 1:16), and God corrects them when they sin. We are not "punished" for our sin in the sense of losing salvation or being eternally separated from God, yet we are disciplined. "The Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son" (Hebrews 12:6). First John 5:16 says there comes a point when God can no longer allow a believer to continue in unrepentant sin. When that point is reached, God may decide to take the life of the stubbornly sinful believer. The "death" is physical death. God at times purifies His church by removing those who deliberately disobey Him. The apostle John makes a distinction between the "sin that leads to death" and the "sin that does not lead to death." Not all sin in the church is dealt with the same way because not all sin rises to the level of the "sin that leads to death." ([What is the sin unto death?](#))

**John MacArthur** - [1 John 5 The Sin unto Death](#) or [Sermon](#)

**And great fear came over all who heard of it** - Fear seized **all who heard** (believers and non-believers alike - see Acts 5:11) The church would have realized that "Holy" in the name "Holy Spirit" indicates He is indeed set apart from sin and it can be a fearful thing to lie to Him and/or commit willful, pre-meditated sin (like A&S)! Another result of two sudden deaths was to warn the infant church of the danger of sin "in the camp" and ultimately to facilitate every member's desire to pursue purity and godliness. It is also very likely that it cause many saints to do some "internal (heart) inventory" akin to that seen in Paul's exhortation to the church at Corinth (that had a few issues with "sin in the camp")...

**Test** yourselves to see if you are in the faith; **examine** yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about

yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?(2 Cor 13:5+)

Peter could have justifiably uttered the words Daniel spoke to the King Belshazzar...

But the **God in whose hand are your life-breath** and your ways, you have not glorified. (Da 5:23+)

**Comment** - Every breath we take is a gift from God's hand! God withdrew His hand from A&G. This should make all of us tremble when we wantonly, willfully sin and think we are "getting away with it!" God just might withdraw His hand which gives us breath!

Just a point of conjecture but can you imagine the offerings the congregation gave that afternoon when the offering plate passed by!

**Fear** (5401)(**phobos**) can mean reverence (holy awe) but in this context certainly describes a significant element of dread or terror produced by the Judgment of God.

**J Edwin Orr** on **great fear** - William Castle, from Sichuan in China, said, 'Revival means judgment day.' That's what happened in [Shantung](#). Judgment on missionaries, pastors, people, and then fear fell on the world and God's name was glorified. And people have such a wrong idea of what revival means... They think of revival as something triumphant and, shall we say, an overflow of great blessing. It's judgment day for the church. But after the judgment, and after things are settled, it's blessing abounding." (His last sermon [Revival is Like Judgment Day](#))

**Guzik** - Ananias' sin was greed (in keeping the money); but his greater sin was pride, in wanting everyone to consider him so spiritual that he "gave it all" – when he had not. Their sin is imitated in many ways today. We can create or allow the impression that we are people of Bible reading or prayer when we are not. We can create or allow the impression that we have it all together when we do not. We can exaggerate our spiritual accomplishments or effectiveness to appear something we are not. It is too easy to be happy with the image of spirituality without the reality of spiritual life. Their great sin was rooted in pride. Pride corrupts the church more quickly than anything else.

**Lesson** - Don't pretend to be someone in church that you are not!

**Lesson** - Believers can become liars and deceivers! (We all need to hear and heed Paul's warning in 1 Cor 10:12)

**Lesson** - "the lesson of Ananias and Sapphira is that we presume greatly on God when we assume that there is always time to repent, time to get right with God, time to get honest with Him. Any such time given by God is an undeserved gift that He owes no one; we should never assume it will always be there." ([Guzik](#))

In times of beginning "of a new period in salvation history" (Wiersbe) God is often more severe in His punishment. Here in Acts of course the Church has just been born and the era of the New Covenant has begun, so we should not be surprised or shocked by the Lord's punishment of these first two church hypocrites!

**H B Hackett** says "Such severity in the beginning of Christianity," says Benson, "was highly proper, in order to prevent any occasion for like punishments for the time to come. Thus **Cain**, the first murderer, was most signally punished by the immediate hand of God; thus, upon the erecting of God's temporal kingdom among the Jews, **Nadab and Abihu** were struck dead for offering strange fire before the Lord; and **Korah** and his company were swallowed up alive by the earth for opposing Moses, the faithful servant of God; and the two hundred and fifty men who offered incense upon that occasion were consumed by a fire which came out from the Lord; and, lastly, **Uzzah**, for touching the ark, fell by as sudden and remarkable a divine judgment when the kingdom was going to be established in the house of David, to teach Israel a reverence for God and divine things. Nay, in establishing even human laws, a severe punishment upon the first transgressors doth oft prevent the punishment of others, who are deterred from like attempts by the suffering of the first criminals."

And so we see a similar fearful punishment described by Moses in the early days of the holy priesthood in which God's wrath broke forth on Aaron's sons who were offering "**strange fire**."

Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and **offered strange fire** before the LORD, which He had not commanded them ([PICTURE](#)). 2 And fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. 3 Then Moses said to Aaron, "It is what the LORD spoke, saying, 'By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, And before all the people I will be honored.'" So Aaron, therefore, kept silent. (Leviticus 10:1-3+)

**Related Resources:**

- [Who were Nadab and Abihu?](#)

- [What is the meaning of the strange fire in Leviticus 10:1?](#)

Another description of God's judgment for irreverence is found in the story of Uzzah touching the Ark of Testimony...

Now David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. 2 And David arose and went with all the people who were with him to Baale-judah, to bring up from there the ark of God which is called by the Name, the very name of the LORD of hosts who is enthroned above the cherubim. 3 They placed the ark of God on a new cart that they might bring it from the house of Abinadab which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were leading the new cart. 4 So they brought it with the ark of God from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill; and Ahio was walking ahead of the ark. 5 Meanwhile, David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before the LORD with all kinds of instruments made of fir wood, and with lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets and cymbals. 6 But when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out toward the **ark of God and took hold of it**, for the oxen nearly upset it. 7 And the anger of the LORD burned against Uzzah, and **God struck him down there for his irreverence**; and he died there by the ark of God ([picture](#)). (1 Sa 6:1-7)

**Comment** - The second time, David was careful to bring the Ark of Testimony on the shoulders of the Levites as God had commanded (1 Chr 15:12-15).

#### Related Resources:

- [Why did God strike Uzzah dead for touching the Ark of the Covenant?](#)
- [What is the ark of the testimony?](#)

We also see an especially fearful punishment for the [rebellion of Korah](#)...

And he (MOSES) spoke to the congregation, saying, "Depart now from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing that belongs to them, or you will be swept away in all their sin." 27 So they got back from around the dwellings of Korah, Dathan and Abiram; and Dathan and Abiram came out and stood at the doorway of their tents, along with their wives and their sons and their little ones. 28 Moses said, "By this you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these deeds; for this is not my doing. 29 "If these men die the death of all men or if they suffer the fate of all men, then the LORD has not sent me. 30 "But if the LORD brings about an entirely new thing and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that is theirs, and they descend alive into Sheol, then you will understand that these men have spurned the LORD." 31 As he finished speaking all these words, the ground that was under them split open ([Dore Woodcut](#)); 32 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men who belonged to Korah with their possessions. 33 So they and all that belonged to them went down alive to Sheol; and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly. (Nu 16:26-33)

#### Related Resource:

- [What was the significance of the rebellion of Korah?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about rebellion?](#)

### Acts 5:6 The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him.

KJV Acts 5:6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.

- Leviticus 10:4-6; Dt 21:23; 2 Samuel 18:17; John 19:40
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him** - They did not practice embalming (and even today do not [practice embalming](#) possibly because of Ge 3:19! See [Bob Utley's](#) topic "[Burial practices](#)"). In the hot climate, dead bodies needed to be buried quickly to prevent decay and stench. They wrapped him up in a shroud or [enshrouded](#) him. Did you notice that Luke mentions no weeping as one often sees when someone dies (e.g. Tabitha in Acts 9:36-37, 38)! The deaths of A&S were not commemorated, commended or cried over, as one would see with the usual expressions of mourning!

**They covered him** (wound him up - KJV)([4958](#))(**sustello** from **sun** = together + **stello** = to bring, contract, shrink) means to draw

together, contract. In the passive, it describes an extent of time as to be limited, be short, be near the end (1Cor 7:29); (2) in Acts 5.6 *sustello* is variously understood: (a) wrap up, enshroud; (b) snatch up; (c) remove.

But this I say, brethren, the time has been shortened, so that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none (1 Cor 7:29)

**Comment** - To what time does Paul refer? The brevity of a man's lifespan and the imminence of the Lord's return. The first is short, the second sudden! Are you ready?

**ESV Study Bible** on (1 Cor 7:29-31) - The purpose of 1 Corinthians, in large part, is to encourage Christians to attend to the kinds of daily affairs that would be unimportant if Christ were returning within weeks or months....Paul's point here is simply that the **form of this world**, or its day-to-day affairs, is not eternal. Christians should prioritize their human relationships, material possessions, and worldly dealings accordingly.

**Vine** - the coming of the Lord is always to be regarded as nigh for the believer, who is to be in constant expectation of His return, and thus is to keep himself from being the slave of earthly conditions and life's relationships.

**Vincent** has a lengthy note on **sustello** - *wrapped him round*. The verb means to *draw together*, or *draw in*; hence used for *shortening sail, reducing expenses, lowering or humbling* a person. In 1 Corinthians 7:29, it occurs in the phrase, "the time is *short* (*συνεστωλμνος*, Rev., properly, *shortened*);" i.e., *drawn together, contracted*. In the sense of *wrapping up* it is found in Aristophanes, of *wrapping cloaks or garments about one*; also of *tucking up* the garments about the loins, as a preparation for service. In the sense of *shrouding for burial*, it occurs in Euripides ("Troades," 382): "They were not *shrouded* (*συνεπεστλησαν*) by the hands of a wife." In medical language, of *bandaging* a limb; of the *contraction* of tumors, and of organs of the body, etc. Some, however, as Meyer, refer the word here to the *pressing together* of the dead man's limbs. (Word Studies in the New Testament)

Peter and the congregations recognized Ananias' dropping dead was clearly a judgment from God which in Deuteronomy called for immediate burial.

"If a man has committed a sin worthy of death and he is put to death (cf ANANIAS), and you hang him on a tree, his corpse shall not hang all night on the tree, but you shall surely bury him on the same day (for he who is hanged is accursed of God), so that you do not defile your land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance. (Dt 21:22-23)

**Robertson** adds "They may have used their own mantles. The time for burial was short in Jerusalem for sanitary reasons and to avoid ceremonial defilement.

**PURE CHURCH AND HOLY GOD** - Some read the account of Ananias and Sapphira being struck down and accuse God of being harsh. "I thought God was supposed to be loving and forgiving. I thought all that wrath stuff was for Old Testament times." With an emphasis on grace and mercy, it's easy to overlook the equally important truth of God's holiness. We must remember that God has not changed (Malachi 3:6). He still hates sin as much as he ever did. And he is especially offended when his own people cut moral corners and try to hide behind the cloak of forgiveness. Thus, sinning Christians were removed from fellowship in order to preserve the purity of the church. (Life Application Bible Commentary – Acts)

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**Steven Cole** - [George Verwer](#), the founder of Operation Mobilization, tells of a time when he was about 19. He heard a man deliver a powerful sermon. It moved Verwer to rededicate his life to Christ. He went up to talk with the man at the end of the service. As he stood there, he noticed all of the church people in their expensive clothes. He also noticed that the speaker was very well dressed, exuding an aura of success. He asked him whether he thought that these people would respond to the message of giving everything for Christ. The speaker looked down at Verwer and said, "See here, young man, I'm an evangelist, and this is my living. This is how I make my money, by preaching and doing God's work. What I was speaking about, that was all true, but I doubt if anyone would really live that way, unless perhaps there was a war on." Verwer walked away feeling very shaken. Hypocrisy is a deadly sin. It destroys the hypocrite and it damages many that are contaminated by it. In this New Year, I urge you to allow God's Word to confront your life. If you're playing the religion game, quit now! Get real with the living God. Spend time each day with Him. Judge your sins and turn from them. Seek to grow in godly character. Our God desires truth in the innermost being (Ps. 51:6). ([Acts 4-36-5-11 The Deadly Sin of Hypocrisy](#))

**Acts 5:7** Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.

KJV Acts 5:7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours** - Luke pays close attention to detail in recording 3 hours. And we complain today if the service lasts more than 90 minutes! Here we see it was still going on 3 hours later! It is interesting that there was a 3 hour delay - can you imagine the attentiveness to the apostles' preaching during this time! The delay and repetition of his wife's death would also serve to imprint this event forever in the minds of all the church.

**McGee** - Simon Peter knows what will happen to her. He did not know what was going to happen to Ananias, but now it is quite obvious what will happen to this woman.

**And his wife came in, not knowing what had happened** - She did not have a clue! It is surprising that no one grabbed her as she came in and told her "You won't believe what happened to Ananias." But God was in charge and He would see His judgment through to completion. She was undoubtedly ready to receive commendation and praise from Peter for such a generous gift to the needy! Such is the self-deception of hypocrisy. Look out! You could be acting the part of a religious hypocrite and not even have a clue! Pray Psalm 139:23-24!

**Acts 5:8 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."**

KJV Acts 5:8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONFESS

**And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?"** - Peter did not have to ask this question, but in so doing it at least gave her an opportunity to tell the truth about what A&S had received for the sale.

**Constable** - He did not warn her ahead of time by mentioning her husband's death because he wanted her to tell him the truth. She added a spoken lie to hypocrisy.

**Sold** (paid) ([591](#)) see [apodidomi](#)

**And she said, "Yes, that was the price."** - **Pretense** persists! Peter knew how much they had received for the land because he knew that Ananias had only brought a portion. Think about this for a moment. What had A&S agreed to do with the proceeds? They had agreed to keep back some for themselves. Peter's awareness of what they sold the land for should have been a "wake up" call to Sapphira. Now it is possible he used the value of the proceeds Ananias had laid at his feet. If so, that would not have alerted her that the "jig was up." But if she had come to her senses and was no longer held captive by the devil to do his will (2 Ti 2:26), she could have said "No, the real price was such and such." Either way, she had an opportunity to confess and repent of her sin, but choose not to do so. After all the eyes of the entire congregation were on her and it would have been most embarrassing to admit they had tried to rob God!

**Acts 5:9 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."**

KJV Acts 5:9 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.

- **Why is it that** Ge 3:9-13; Luke 16:2; Ro 3:19

- **you have agreed together** Acts 23:20-22; Dt 13:6-8; Pr 11:21; 16:5; Ps 50:18; Micah 7:3
- **to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test** Acts 5:3,4; Ex 17:2,7; Nu 14:22; Ps 78:18-20,40,41,56; 95:8-11; Mt 4:7; 1 Cor 10:9
- **the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door** Acts 5:6; 2 Kings 6:32; Ro 10:15
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Then Peter said to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together (cf the "Why" question in Acts 5:3) - The verb **sumphoneo** gives us our English "symphony." The couple had practiced *harmonizing* their hypocrisy! But ironically their "spiritual symphony" was characterized by [dissonance](#) not [consonance](#).

Vincent adds "The figure in the word is that of *concord of sounds*. 'Your souls were *attuned* to each other respecting this deceit.'"

**Agreed together** (4856) (**sumphoneo** from **sun** = together + **phoneo** = make a sound) literally means to sound together. **Vine** = "to be in accord, primarily of musical instruments." To be in harmony or unison. To fit in with or agree with (Acts 15:15, Lk 5:36). To fit together - secular use the joints of the stones fit together. To match in sound. To have common interests - be in agreement with. To come to an agreement (Mt 18:19, 20:2, Acts 5:9).

**Vine sumphoneo** "is used in the NT of the "agreement" (a) of persons concerning a matter, Matt. 18:19; Matt. 20:2, 13; Acts 5:9; (b) of the writers of Scripture, Acts 15:15; (c) of things that are said to be congruous in their nature, Luke 5:36. Note: Cp. *symphōnēsis*, "concord," 2 Cor. 6:15, and *symphōnia*, "music," Luke 15:25."

**Sumphoneo** - 6x in 6v - agree(3), agreed(1), agreed together(1), match(1) Mt. 18:19; Mt. 20:2; Mt. 20:13; Lk. 5:36; Acts 5:9; Acts 15:15. Three times in Septuagint - Ge 14:3 = "came as allies", 2 Ki 12:8 = "the priests agreed", Isa 7:2.

**To put the Spirit of the Lord to the test** - How? By lying to God (Acts 5:4) "You have not lied to men but to God." Constable remarks that "Putting God to the test means seeing how far one can go in disobeying God-in this case lying to Him-before He will judge (cf. Deut. 6:16; Matt. 4:7). This is very risky business."

Do we ever put God to the test? Absolutely! Every time we sin willfully, we take our lives in our hands, because we are testing God! Thank God that He is filled with mercy and forgiveness and longsuffering. But next time we make provision to commit that sin which so easily entangles us, perhaps we might pause a moment and ponder what Acts 5, asking the Spirit to steel our hearts and our resolve to not sin against God's grace.

**Horton on put the Spirit of the Lord to the test**- They were deliberately trying to [Acts 5:13](#) see how far they could go in disobedience without provoking God's wrath. (BORROW [Acts Commentary](#))

Here are some examples of **putting the Lord to the test** (using same verb *peirazo* or derivative *ekpeirazo*).

Exodus 17:2 Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water that we may drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? **Why do you test (Heb = [nacah/nasah](#); Lxx = [peirazo](#)) the LORD?"**

Numbers 14:22 "Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, **yet have put Me to the test (Lxx = [peirazo](#))** these ten times and have not listened to My voice

Dt 6:16 "You shall not put the LORD your God to the test (Heb = [nacah/nasah](#); Lxx - [ekpeirazo](#)) as you tested Him at Massah (derived from *nasah* = to test).

Psalm 78:18; And in their heart they put God to the test (Heb = [nacah/nasah](#); Lxx - [ekpeirazo](#)) By asking food according to their desire.

Psalm 78:41 Again and again they tempted (Heb = [nacah/nasah](#); Lxx = [peirazo](#)) God, And pained the Holy One of Israel.

Psalm 78:56 Yet they tempted (Heb = [nacah/nasah](#); Lxx = [peirazo](#)) and rebelled against the Most High God And did not keep His testimonies,

Luke 4:12 And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is said, **YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST ([ekpeirazo](#)).**"

**Test** (3985) ([peirazo](#) from the noun **peira** = test from **peiro** = perforate, pierce through to test durability of things) is a morally neutral word simply meaning "to test". Whether the **test** is for a good (as it proved to be in Heb 11:17) or evil (Mt 4:1 "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be **tempted** by the devil") depends on the intent of the one giving the test and also on the response of the one tested. To test God means to blatantly defy God, even to the point of daring Him to act. A&S found out it is not a good thing to test God Who acted with swiftness and severity!

## Related Resource:

- [What does it mean to test God?](#)

**Behold** (2400)(**idou**) is the second person singular aorist middle imperative of eidon which means to see, perceive, look at. In the NT **idou** is used as a demonstrative particle that draws attention to what follows. **Idou** in the **middle voice** means "you yourself look, see, perceive!" The **aorist imperative** is a command emphasizing "Do it now! Don't delay!"

**Spurgeon** reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

**The feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well-** Peter did not say that he knew what was going to happen to Ananias prior to his death. But this time Peter knew what would happen to Sapphira and his words must have chilled her to the bone! This is the first time she realized that her husband was dead.

**Wiersbe** - We must keep in mind that their sin was not in robbing God of money but in lying to Him and robbing Him of glory. They were not required to sell the property; and, having sold it, they were not required to give any of the money to the church (Acts 5:4). Their lust for recognition conceived sin in their hearts (Acts 5:4, 9), and that sin eventually produced death (James 1:15). ([Wiersbe Commentary on Acts](#))

**James** warned us...

**Let no one say** (**present imperative**) when he is tempted (**peirazo**), "I am being tempted (**peirazo**) by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt (**peirazo**) anyone. 14 But each one is tempted (**peirazo**) when he is carried away and enticed by his own **lust** (**epithumia**). 15 Then when **lust** has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, **it brings forth death**. 16 **Do not be deceived** (**planao**) in the **present imperative with a negative** - the only way to successfully obey this command continually is to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit - Eph 5:18+, cf Gal 5:16-17+, my beloved brethren. (James 1:13-16+)

**Comment** - A&S failed to heed this warning, were deceived and died just like the passage predicts!

**Acts 5:10 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.**

KJV Acts 5:10 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.

NET Acts 5:10 At once she collapsed at his feet and died. So when the young men came in, they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

- **fell** Acts 5:5
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Immediately** marks Sapphira's death as supernatural. God's judgment is swift and sure!

**Immediately** (at once) (3916)(**parachrema** from **pará** = at, and **chréma** = something useful or needed) means suddenly, immediately, at the very moment, on the spot, forthwith, directly after something else has taken place. Note how most of the uses are in the context of a miraculous event and emphasize the absence of delay in the performance of the miracle.

**She fell at his feet and breathed her last** - She did not put any money at Peter's feet, but just her body!

**Breathed his last** (1634)(see discussion of **ekpsucho**)

**Boice** - "True Christians do not lose their salvation by sinning. The punishment of Ananias and Sapphira, though extreme, was for this life only."

**And the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband-** So it had

taken the young men about 3 hours to bury Ananias for they were just returning from his grave site.

[Robertson](#) on **beside her husband** - Face to face to her husband.

**Blaiklock** addresses the criticism of some who say the treatment of A&S was too harsh - "Peter was severe, and the fate of the two delinquents shocking, but the strictures of Christ on hypocrisy must be borne in mind (Mt. 23:13, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27, 28, 29). . . . The old 'leaven of the Pharisees' was at work, and for the first time in the community of the saints two persons set out deliberately to deceive their leaders and their friends, to build a reputation for sanctity and sacrifice to which they had no right, and to menace, in so doing, all love, all trust, all sincerity. And not only was the sin against human brotherhood, but against the Spirit of God, so recently and powerfully manifest in the Church."

**Acts 5:11 And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things.**

KJV Acts 5:11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

NET Acts 5:11 Great fear gripped the whole church and all who heard about these things.

- Acts 5:5; 19:17; Ps 89:7; Jer 32:40; 1 Cor 10:11,12; Php 2:12; Heb 4:1; 11:7; Heb 12:15,28; 1 Peter 1:17; Rev 15:4
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## MEGA FEAR GRIPPED THE ENTIRE CHURCH

It is worth noting that the early church moved from the "**mega power**" and "**mega grace**" of Acts 4:33+, to the "**mega fear**" of Acts 5:11! And power, grace and fear are all still important to the vitality and effectiveness of God's Church. How does your church rank on the "**mega**" scale? Is it "[O-mega](#)" or "No-mega?"

**And great fear came over the whole church** - Luke reiterates the effect of her instant death was instant fear on the congregation. I was made aware of a situation in which there was secret sin in the life of a pastor which resulted in his death. Sadly, the sin was covered up and never revealed to the congregation. One wonders what would have been the effect had the congregation been told the truth in love. Clearly **the whole church** was aware of the sin of A&S, and it undoubtedly had a sobering and likely purifying effect. "No doubt much self-examination took place following the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira." (MacArthur)

The writer of Hebrews alluded to the importance of godly fear when he wrote...

Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God **an acceptable service with reverence ([eulabeia](#)) and awe; 29 for our God is a consuming fire** (Hebrews 12:28-29+)

**H B Hackett** on **over the whole church, and over all who heard** - To produce this impression both in the church and out of it was doubtless one of the objects which the death of Ananias and Sapphira was intended to accomplish. The punishment inflicted on them, while it displayed the just abhorrence with which God looked upon this particular instance of prevarication, was important also as a permanent testimony against similar offences in every age of the church.

Peter later wrote a passage what could be viewed as a "comment" on the fearful events of Acts 5:1-11...

For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? (1 Peter 4:17+)

**D Edmond Hiebert** "explains the divine aspect of the readers' (OF PETER'S LETTER WHO WERE) suffering for Christ's sake. It was the time or appropriate season for God to deal in judgment with His people. Being infinitely holy, God cannot condone sin; even His own family stands under His judgment. The readers' experience of His chastening discipline should be understood in light of the coming judgment. It is appropriate for God's judgment to begin (commence its operation) "with the family of God", His people (1 Peter 2:5), "as a proof of their membership in His family, and a pledge of their escape from the end of those whom the last judgment shall find disobedient to the Gospel." ([First Peter](#))

**John MacArthur** on **judgment...household of God** - Not condemnation, but the purging, chastening, and purifying of the church by the loving hand of God. It is far better and more important to kingdom work to endure suffering as the Lord purges and strengthens the church, than to endure the eternal sufferings



of the unbeliever in the lake of fire. And, if God so strongly and painfully judges His church which He loves, what will be His fury on the ungodly? (The MacArthur Study Bible)

[What does it mean that judgment begins at the house of God?](#) - excellent

Horton wisely wrote "**Some people imagine we must lower God's standards for the Church to make progress in today's world.** But this has never been true. The Church has always been strengthened when it catches a vision of the holiness of God and seeks practical holiness in individual lives." (BORROW [Acts Commentary](#)) (Ed: Acts 5:14 records that the first church's "**seeker unfriendly**" service, in contrast to scaring away the seekers, in fact drew "**all the more believers in the Lord.**")

**And over all who heard of these things** - Who are the all who heard? These would appear to be non-believers as they are described as a group separate from the **whole church**. And did this "mega" fear have any relation to the fact that "all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number?" (Acts 5:14) We know that "The **fear** of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." (Pr 9:10)

**Fear** (5401)(**phobos**) can mean reverence (holy awe) but in this context certainly describes a significant element of dread or terror produced by the Judgment of God. **Phobos** describes awe, respect in believers, foreboding, terror in unbelievers! (cf Lk 12:4,5+)

**Paul** used **phobos** in a similar context of congregational discipline writing

Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be **fearful (phobos)** of sinning. (1 Timothy 5:19-20)

The writer of Hebrews uses the related adjective **phoberos** (derived from **phobos**) describing that...

For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY." And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE." It is a **terrifying** (frightful, formidable, fearful, dreadful, terrible, horrifying) thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (Hebrews 10:30-31+).

**Comment:** A&S are not an example of "church discipline" but of the Judgment of God Who is jealous for His Church, the Bride of Christ.

**Church** (1577)(**ekklesia** from **ek** = out + **klesis** = a calling, verb = **kaleo** = to call) literally means called out (but see note by Louw-Nida below) and as commonly used in the Greco-Roman vernacular referred to citizens who were *called out* from their homes to be publicly assembled or gathered to discuss or carry out affairs of state. **Wuest** writes that "The word **assembly** is a good one-word translation of **ekklesia**." While **ekklesia** was used in the Septuagint to describe the congregation of Israel (e.g., Dt 9:10 Lxx of "assembly" = **ekklesia**) , the use of **ekklesia** for the Body of Christ does not justify calling the church the "new Israel" as the NT church is an entity never described in the Old Testament. (See [Israel of God](#))

**Constable on ekklesia** - This was a common word that writers often used to describe assemblies of people that congregated for political and various other types of meetings. The word "church," like the word "baptism," can refer to more than one thing. Sometimes it refers to the body of Christ as it has existed throughout history, the universal church. Sometimes it refers to Christians living in various places during one particular period of time (e.g., the early church). Sometimes it refers to a group of Christians who live in one area at a particular time, a local church. Here it seems to refer to the local church in Jerusalem.

**Robertson** - Here **ekklēsia** for the first time in Acts of the believers in Jerusalem. Twice already in the Gospels, once of the whole body of believers or the Kingdom (Matthew 16:18), the other of the local body (Matthew 18:17). In Acts 7:38 it is used of the whole congregation of Israel while in Acts 19:32 it is used of a public assembly in Ephesus. But already in Acts 8:3 it is applied to the church which Saul was persecuting in their homes when not assembled. So here the etymological meaning of "assembly" disappears for "the church" were now the scattered saints hiding in their separate homes. The whole body of believers in Jerusalem and all who heard of the fate of Ananias and Sapphira (beautiful, her name means) were in awe and dread. It was already a dangerous thing to be a follower of Christ unless one was willing to walk straight.

All of Luke's uses of **ekklesia** - Notice this is the first use in Acts.

Acts 5:11; Acts 7:38; Acts 8:1; Acts 8:3; Acts 9:31; Acts 11:22; Acts 11:26; Acts 12:1; Acts 12:5; Acts 13:1; Acts 14:23; Acts 14:27; Acts 15:3; Acts 15:4; Acts 15:22; Acts 15:41; Acts 16:5; Acts 18:22; Acts 19:32; Acts 19:39; Acts 19:41; Acts 20:17; Acts 20:28;

**George Barkman: 5 Reasons for discipline in the church:**

- Purity = remove contamination from unconfessed sin; Remove the leaven (1 Cor. 5); Healthy body of Christ
- Perspective = Bring everybody back into the right perspective = seriousness of sin from God's perspective

- Preventive measure = keeps others from sinning
- Perception of the world = Testimony of the church to outside world; outside world afraid to fake being a Christian; lines are clearly drawn; understanding that identification with Christ means a commitment to a life of holiness
- Power for the church to continue to grow and prosper

Yet few churches practice any form of church discipline – Result: the church is rampant with spiritual hypocrisy!

**John Stott** sums up this section - We have now seen that, if the devil's first tactic was to destroy the church by force from without, his second was to destroy it by falsehood from within. He has not given up the attempt, whether by the hypocrisy of those who profess but do not practise, or by the stubbornness of those who sin but do not repent. The church must preserve its vigilance. (TNTC-Acts)

## Poor Trade-Offs

Read: Acts 5:1-11

He who sows to his flesh will . . . reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will . . . reap everlasting life. —Galatians 6:8

Life is full of trade-offs. Today's poor choices are a down payment on tomorrow's problems. It's all a part of living with the law of God that says we reap what we sow (Gal. 6:7).

That was true of a 30-year-old Mississippi resident. A conviction for felony drunk driving resulted in his getting a 15-year prison sentence. The judge then suspended 14 years of the sentence if the man would honor the terms of a 1-year house arrest.

The trade-off was simple: Stay home and out of trouble for 1 year instead of going to prison for 15. But the man didn't like being cooped up, so he went fishing—driving with a suspended license to get there. He was arrested and the judge threw him in prison. The fishing trip cost him many years of freedom.

What bad trade-offs do we make? Do we reject God's mercy so we can enjoy sin's season of pleasure? In the Bible, we see some examples. Moses traded the Promised Land for an outburst of anger (Num. 20:7-13). David traded his reputation for a night of passion (2 Sam. 11). **Ananias and Sapphira traded life for some extra money (Acts 5:1-11).**

Are you facing temptation today? Don't give in. Cling to Jesus. Obey His commands. Never exchange fellowship with Him for anything. It's always a poor trade-off.

It's wise to flee when tempted—

A fool is one who'd stay;

For those who toy with evil

Soon learn it doesn't pay.

—DJD

In the heat of temptation, don't lose your cool.

By Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

## Don't Break Community

Read: Acts 5:1-11

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. —Romans 12:9

The story of Ananias and Sapphira is a depressing chord that disrupts an upbeat account of the young church in action. Thousands of converts had trusted Christ. They were worshipping together and cared deeply for one another.

One member, Barnabas, sold some valuable acreage and gave all the proceeds to meet some pressing church needs. Ananias took his lead from Barnabas and decided that he too would make an impressive gift. But he was only seeking attention. He and his wife pretended to give everything, but they gave only a portion.

They got noticed—they both dropped dead in front of everybody! Taking the offering was never the same after that. Luke tells us that "great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things" (Acts 5:11).

Ananias and Sapphira lied to God by trying to deceive the congregation, which disrupted the sense of church community. To live in community demands that we live with integrity. That's why God took such drastic action.

When we join a church, we become part of other people's lives. Our love for them should be without hypocrisy. That glorifies God and benefits everybody. We are to take our involvement in church as seriously as God does.

We join our hearts and hands together,  
Faithful to the Lord's command;  
We hold each other to God's standards—  
All that truth and love demand.  
—DJD

To keep harmony in the church, keep in tune with Christ.

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## **[How Honest Are You?](#)**

Read: Acts 5:1-11

Those who deal truthfully are [God's] delight. —Proverbs 12:22

Woman's Day magazine surveyed more than 2,000 people to check out their honesty level. When asked, "How honest are you?" 48 percent said very honest, 50 percent said somewhat honest, and the other 2 percent said not very honest.

Sixty-eight percent of respondents confessed that they had taken office supplies from their job for personal use. And 40 percent admitted that they would cheat on their taxes if they knew they wouldn't get caught.

Ananias and Sapphira must have thought they could get away with lying (Acts 5:1-11). But they quickly found out differently when Peter confronted them and told them that they had lied to the Holy Spirit. Immediately they were struck dead (vv.5,10).

The Lord's desire was to keep His new church pure so He could use the believers in the lives of others. As Bible teacher G. Campbell Morgan says, "The church pure is the church powerful. . . . The only power [able to make] a church pure is that of the indwelling Spirit of God." The purity of the church led to their testimony spreading, and "believers were increasingly added to the Lord" (v.14).

Let's be the kind of people who "deal truthfully" (Prov. 12:22) so we can be used by the Lord.

Lord, by Your Spirit grant that we In word and deed may honest be; All falsehood we would cast aside, From You, O Lord, we cannot hide. —D. De Haan

There are no degrees of honesty.

By Anne Cetas ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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## **[Be Safe—Not Sorry!](#)**

Read: Acts 5:1-11 | Bible in a Year: Psalms 31-32; Acts 23:16-35

Do not quench the Spirit. —1 Thessalonians 5:19

Two young women lost their lives in a fire that swept through their apartment as they slept. Their home was equipped with a smoke detector that was in good working order, but it hadn't gone off. Why? Fire inspectors concluded that the device had been deactivated for a party the night before. The unit had been disconnected to keep it from sounding off because of the smoke from cooking and candles.

In Acts 5 we have another example of two people who apparently deactivated an alarm system that could have saved their lives. Ananias and Sapphira must have quenched the Holy Spirit by turning a deaf ear to their consciences, believing they had plenty of good reasons for doing what they did. But their action cost them their lives.

We need to realize that the Holy Spirit was not given to annoy us like a sensitive smoke detector. He doesn't sound false alarms. When He activates our conscience by bringing to mind a principle or warning from God's Word, it is really His love and wisdom in action.

By weighing the warnings of His love against the cost of our foolishness, we'll soon realize that it's always better to be safe than

sorry. —MRD II

Our conscience is a gift from God,  
It is a guiding light;  
And when aligned with God's true Word,  
It shows us what is right.

—Sper

To ignore your conscience is to invite trouble.

By Mart DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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### **Nobody Can Keep A Secret From God**

Read: Acts 5:1-11

Cleanse me from secret faults. —Psalm 19:12

Washington, D.C., is full of secrets. Some say as many as 3 billion! But not all of them are legitimate secrets that safeguard national security. Many are documents concerning hazardous medical experiments made years ago on human subjects without their knowledge or consent. Others are contracts and bills that civilian manufacturers, often guilty of excessive overcharges, labeled "confidential." But now, under a new policy inaugurated by the Department of Energy, "a pyramid-like tomb of classified documents" is being systematically exposed to public scrutiny. As a result, many people and companies are being sued.

Life, like Washington, is full of secrets. Most secrets are trivial and unimportant. Some, however, are evil and tragic, as illustrated in today's Bible reading. What about secret sins? We may be able to hide them successfully from people, yet on God's timetable a day is scheduled when He who "knows the secrets of the heart" (Ps. 44:21) "will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing" (Eccl. 12:14).

Bring those secrets out in the open. Confess your sins now and claim the complete cleansing that is promised through the Savior's sacrifice (1 Jn. 1:9).

You cannot hide your sin from God,  
He knows what's in your heart;  
Confession is the quickest way  
To make a brand-new start.

—Sper

Our secret sins are open scandal to God.

By Vernon Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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### **NOT IN IT FOR THE MONEY**

It is unfortunate when the ministry of the Gospel is sometimes hindered by an overemphasis on money. The unsaved world is convinced that most preachers and missionaries are only involved in "religious rackets" to take money from innocent people. No doubt there are religious "racketeers" in the world today, people who "use" religion to exploit others and control them. We would certainly not agree with their purposes or their practices. We must make sure that nothing we do in our own ministry gives the impression that we are of their number.

A wrong attitude toward money has hindered the Gospel from the earliest days of the church. Simon the magician thought he could buy the gift of the Spirit with money (Acts 8:18-24). Ananias and Sapphira loved money more than they loved the truth, and God killed them (Acts 5).

For eighteen fruitful years, Dr. H.A. Ironside pastored Moody Church in Chicago. I recall the first time I heard him announce an offering. He said, "We ask God's people to give generously. If you are not a believer in Jesus Christ, we do not ask you to give. We have a gift for you—eternal life through faith in Christ!" He made it clear that the offering was for believers, lest the unsaved in the congregation stumble over money and then reject the Gospel. (BORROW [Pause for Power - Warren Wiersbe](#))

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### **Restoring Integrity**

Read: Acts 5:1-11

You have not lied to men but to God. —Acts 5:4

One sunny day, four high school boys couldn't resist the temptation to skip classes. The next morning they explained to a teacher that they had missed her class because their car had a flat tire. To their relief, she smiled and said, "Well, you missed a quiz yesterday, so take your seats and get out a pencil and paper." She waited as they sat down and got ready for the quiz. Then she said, "First question: Which tire was flat?"

No one can get away with lying. In Acts 5, Ananias and Sapphira thought they were lying only to Peter and the other believers. But the apostle said to them, "You have not lied to men but to God."

Truth is an attribute of God. When we lie, we offend Him. And sooner or later He will uncover every falsehood—if not in this life, then at the judgment (Rom. 14:10-12).

We live in a highly competitive world, and sometimes we may be strongly tempted to shade the truth to get ahead. But the short-term gains from lying are worth little compared with the long-term benefits of telling the truth.

If you have deceived someone, confess it to that person and to the Lord. It may be humbling, but it is the first step to restore integrity in your life.

The road that leads to misery  
Is caused by a tongue that wags;  
Beware of lying lips, my friend,  
And a mouth that boasts and brags.  
—Shade

To avoid lying, do nothing that needs to be covered up.

By Dennis J. DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**Acts 5:12 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.**

KJV Acts 5:12 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.

NET Acts 5:12 Now many miraculous signs and wonders came about among the people through the hands of the apostles. By common consent they were all meeting together in Solomon's Portico.

- **At the hands of the apostles** Acts 2:43; 3:6,7; 4:30,33; 9:33,40; 14:3,8-10; 16:18; 19:11; Mark 16:17,18; Mark 16:20; Ro 15:19; 2 Cor 12:12; Heb 2:4
- **they were all with one accord** Acts 1:14; 2:42,46; 4:32
- **in Solomon's portico** Acts 3:11; John 10:23
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Vance Havner** comments that "Here is the church in the full bloom of her power: a Spirit-filled church, a wonder-working (not a wondering!) church; a church that stirred up the devil."

**At the hands of the apostles** - This is an important detail because many today desire signs and wonders. But notice that Luke says these signs and wonders were performed not by the disciples in general but by the apostles. And while some maintain there are still apostles today, there is absolutely no way they are apostles in the true Biblical sense, for they lack one of the major requirements of a NT apostle -- they have not seen Jesus physically and personally.

While God's Spirit used **the hands of the apostles** to carry out the **signs and wonders** we must not forget that they were enabled to perform them "through the name of Your holy servant Jesus." (Acts 4:30) The apostles were God's instruments. God was the One performing the signs and wonders.

**Apostles** (652)(**apostolos** from **apo** = from + **stello** = send forth) ([Click](#) discussion of [apostle](#)) means one sent forth from by another, often with a special commission to represent another and to accomplish his work. In the ancient world a **apostle** was the personal representatives of the king, functioning as an ambassador with the king's authority and provided with credentials to prove

he was the king's envoy. At times in the NT **apostle** carried the broad meaning of one sent as a messenger or delegate with instructions from a group or an individual (cf 2Cor 8:23, Php 2:25-note). And so in its broadest sense, **apostle** referred to all believers, because every believer is sent into the world as a witness for Christ. But the term is primarily used as a specific and unique title for the thirteen men (the Twelve, with Matthias replacing Judas, and Paul) whom Christ personally chose and commissioned to authoritatively proclaim the gospel and lead the early church. The thirteen apostles not only were **all called directly by Jesus** but **all were witnesses of His resurrection**, Paul having encountered Him on the Damascus Road after His ascension. Those thirteen apostles were given direct revelation of God's Word to proclaim authoritatively, the gift of healing, and the power to cast out demons (Mt 10:1). By these signs their teaching authority was verified (cf. 2Co 12:12). Their teachings became the foundation of the church (Ep 2:20-note), and their authority extended beyond local bodies of believers to the entire believing world.

**Bob Utley** on **many signs and wonders** - These two terms appear in Peter's quote from Joel 2 in Acts 2:19. Miracles were repeatedly performed (cf. 2:43; 4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 7:36; 14:3; 15:20). Remember that the miraculous is not automatically a sign of deity (cf. Matt. 24:24; and 2 Thess. 2:9), but it was and is a way to confirm the Christian message.

**Many signs and wonders were taking place among the people** - These **signs and wonders** were in essence an answer to their prayer in Acts 4 - "And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence, while You extend Your hand to heal, and **signs and wonders** take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus." (Acts 4:29-30). In fact as Paul later wrote the **signs and wonders** were in themselves "confirmatory signs" substantiating that these men were indeed **apostles** for Paul wrote "**The signs of a true apostle** were performed among you with all perseverance, by **signs and wonders and miracles.**" (2 Cor 12:12)

Beloved, you can mark it down...

### **The church pure is the church powerful!**

Would you describe your local assembly as "powerful?"

The **Lord Jesus** had predicted "These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover. So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God." (Mk 16:17-19) To whom did Jesus make these promises? Clearly He spoke to His apostles. As **Henry Morris** says these signs were "necessary for a time, since they had neither Christ with them in person any longer nor any written record of His life and teachings. Eventually, as the church became established and the New Testament Scriptures were written and circulated, these miraculous attestations became unnecessary. This passage did not specify a time limit, but neither did it promise that such miracles would continue throughout all subsequent time. The very existence of the church and the inspired writings of the apostles in the New Testament would be sufficient."

**Ray Stedman** adds that the signs Jesus promised to His apostles "were never intended for the church at large. They were intended to confirm the ministry of these mighty apostles who laid the foundations of the church in the giving of the Scriptures. Not only were they to manifest the power of God in physical ways, but this physical manifestation was to be a symbol, a sign, of the spiritual power that God would release among the people. It is always a mistake to put emphasis upon a physical miracle. Physical miracles, although they attract attention, also confuse people so that ultimately they miss the point of what God is saying. That is why the Lord Jesus consistently said to the men and women that he healed in the days of his flesh, "Now don't tell anybody about it." He did not send them out to broadcast the story; he said, "Go home and say nothing to anyone." He did not want the confusing effect of physical miracles to thwart his spiritual ministry."

**Signs** (4592) (**semeion** from **sema** = sign) a sign is something that serves as a pointer to aid perception or insight. In the NT **sign** speaks of a token which has behind it a particular message. For example, in John's Gospel (where **semeion** is most concentrated) the apostle recorded certain miracles not for the wonder they produced, but because of the message they taught ultimately "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." (Jn 20:31). All of Luke's uses of **semeion** in the book of Acts - Acts 2:19; Acts 2:22; Acts 2:43; Acts 4:16; Acts 4:22; Acts 4:30; Acts 5:12; Acts 6:8; Acts 7:36; Acts 8:6; Acts 8:13; Acts 14:3; Acts 15:12

**Wonders** (5059) (**teras**) are similar to signs but appeal to the senses, being recognized as a phenomenon that needs to be explained. Something strange, exceptional, causing the beholder to marvel. All of Luke's uses of **teras** in Acts - Acts 2:19; Acts 2:22; Acts 2:43; Acts 4:30; Acts 5:12; Acts 6:8; Acts 7:36; Acts 14:3; Acts 15:12

**Vance Havner** on "**signs and wonders**" - There were miracles in the Bible and God still performs miracles today but they are not

the basis for Christian life and experience. Salvation does not come by the assent of the head but by the consent of the heart. One is not born again when he accepts enough signs and wonders to believe that Jesus is the Saviour of the world but when he trusts Jesus as his own personal Saviour with a simple, childlike trust. The Christian faith is built on the miracle of the Resurrection. We are not saved by intellectually agreeing that Jesus rose from the dead but by receiving the risen Saviour into the heart. The Scriptures read, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10:9). In our daily living as Christians, God works through faith and obedience, not by occasional miracles. There may be miracles but these are the exceptions that prove the rule. Too many dear souls would live by fits and starts, signs and wonders, but if everything were miraculously provided, we would need no faith. We live in a world spoiled by sin and subject to all the distempers and accidents and troubles that beset humanity in general. It is a world run largely by the law of cause and effect but the Christian walks by a faith that believes when it cannot see or understand and when no sudden revelation comes to clear away the fog. If God supplied us with instant ready answers to every problem or angel intervention in every crisis, there could be no growth of rugged Christian character in the storms of life. If we must have signs and wonders, then we belong to the adulterous generation that believes only what the senses will accept...Some seek special experiences, signs and wonders, but will not live daily by faith, looking unto Jesus.

## SINGLENESS OF PURPOSE

**One accord** (3661) (**homothumadon/homothymadon** from a combination of **homos** = same + **thumos/thymos** = temperament or emotion of the mind) means with one mind, unity of mind, with one purpose, with unanimous consent, of one accord. In a word it means together (Webster says "**together**" means "in company, in union, in the same place, in the same time, in concert, as the allies made war upon France together.") One lexicon says **homothumadon** means "to be of one soul." It speaks of an action agreed upon unanimously (with one impulse) or by common consent. Homothumadon was frequently used in secular settings to describe the unanimity of a synod, of creditors, of a husband and wife, of brother (TLNT, Moulton and Milligan)

Homothumadon is used repeatedly in Acts but sadly is not found after Acts (with one exception Ro 15:6) - Acts 1:14; Acts 2:46; Acts 4:24; Acts 5:12; Acts 7:57; Acts 8:6; Acts 12:20; Acts 15:25; Acts 18:12; Acts 19:29. The point is that this first church was without a doubt the "purest" church that has ever existed.

What is important about this detail of **Solomon's portico**? Two things: (1) It was a big enough space for the entire church (numbering up to 10,000 or more) and (2) It was a perfect place for unbelievers to see the signs and wonders and most importantly to hear the message of the Gospel. Since this was still the Jewish Temple, many unbelieving Jews came through this area enter the inner sections of the Temple to pray and offer sacrifices.

Recall that Jesus had ministered at Solomon's portico (Jn 10:23) and "The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him." (Jn 10:31) when He declared to them "I and the Father are one" (Jn 10:30), clearly claiming deity.

**NET Note** - Solomon's Portico was a covered walkway formed by rows of columns supporting a roof and open on the inner side facing the center of the temple complex. Located beside the Court of the Gentiles, it was a very public area.

**In Solomon's portico** - See [this diagram of the Temple grounds](#) - note the right side of the picture faces East and that is the location of Solomon's Portico on the diagram. The **Portico of Solomon** consisted of a set of magnificent pillars supporting a roof and open on the inner side facing the center of the temple complex. (See [picture of Portico](#).) The Portico was on the east side of the Court of the Gentiles and extended along the entire eastern wall of the Temple forming a covered walkway which was a place of commerce and conversation. (Described by [Josephus, Ant. 15.11.3-5, 20.9.7](#)) On the [diagram of the Temple grounds](#) note for comparison the football field in the bottom right side of the diagram. Here is the point - the Temple grounds adjacent to the Portico of Solomon would have been approximately 4 football fields in size which could have easily provided room for several thousand church members.

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### God's "Buts" Acts 5:12-32

Man's "butts" generally lead to something detrimental, or to some disparagement; God's "butts" always open the way to something better.

1. "AND LAID THEIR HANDS ON THE APOSTLES" v. 18; "BUT AN ANGEL" v. 19; DELIVERANCE OF APOSTLES
2. "AND WHEN THEY HEARD" v. 21; "BUT THE OFFICERS" v. 22; DEFEAT OF OFFICERS
3. "AND THE KEEPERS STANDING" v. 23; "BUT WE FOUND NO MAN" v. 23; DISMAY OF OFFICERS
4. "AND CAME AND TOLD" v. 25; "BUT WITHOUT VIOLENCE" v. 26; DECEIT OF OFFICERS
5. "AND THEY BROUGHT THEM" v. 27; "BUT PETER ANSWERED" v. 29; DEFIANCE OF APOSTLES (Golden Nuggets -

KJV Acts 5:13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.

- **But none of the rest dared to associate with them** Acts 5:5; Nu 17:12,13; 24:8-10; 1 Sa 16:4,5; 1 Kings 17:18; Isa 33:14; Luke 12:1,2; Luke 14:26-35; John 9:22; 12:42; 19:38; 2 Peter 2:20-22
- **however, the people held them in high esteem** Acts 2:47; 4:21; 19:17; Luke 19:37,38,48
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **HOLY FEAR BRINGS A "HOLY REPULSION"**

**Vance Havner on none of the rest dared to associate with them** - People didn't join this church carelessly. They were afraid to. There was a holy awe that kept Tom, Dick, and Harry at a distance. People didn't rush into this fellowship just because it was the nice thing to do. It meant something to unite with this crowd. There was a holy repulsion, and I know of nothing that the church needs more today. It is the last thing we think we need. We are always trying to attract. Our programs, prizes, picnics, and pulpit pyrotechnics are aimed at drawing the people in. Here was a church that made people stand back! We have catered to the world, we have let the world slap the church on the back in coarse familiarity. Here was a church that prospered by repelling! You will observe that all this followed on the heels of the death of Ananias and Sapphira. If the church took a stand today on sins within; if we thundered out, as Peter did here, against lying to the Holy Ghost, it would make the world stand at a respectful distance, and the fear of God would fall on a generation that laughs at the church. What was the sin of Ananias and Sapphira? They pretended to make a full consecration which was not real. And are not our churches filled with men and women who sing, "I surrender all," when they have not surrendered anything? The church is cluttered with people who should never have joined. She already has too many of the kind she has. We need a holy repulsion. You don't have to be different to be a church-member now. There is little about the average church to make men stand back in reverence. In other days we at least had church discipline. I can recall the old Saturday church meetings, when Ananias and Sapphira were dealt with. Some mistakes were made but there was a healthy regard for the sanctity of the church. When the church takes a stand, it repels careless "joiners."...When judgment fell on Ananias and Sapphira the world sat up and took notice. Today we coddle and excuse our sins, call weakness what God calls wickedness. We shelter sin in the Church, and when a preacher would cry out against it he is advised, "Don't be too hard, nobody is perfect," and is given a dressing-down from the text, "Judge not that ye be not judged." We have let down the bars until anybody can get into a church and nobody ever gets out. If we raised the New Testament standard it would stop the rush of superficial disciples and win respect where now there is ridicule.

**But none of the rest dared to associate with them** - Why not? Clearly they had heard had the sudden demise of A&S and there was "great fear over all who heard of these things." (Acts 5:5, 11). The verb **associate** ([kollao](#)) means "glue together" giving us an interesting picture of joining the Church! They did not want to be "glued to" the disciples, as a result of the fate of A&S! It reminds me of the fact that many people glibly join a church, but have never been "glued to" Jesus by grace through faith! Very sad! They are under the deception thinking that they are saved by joining a local church. Some denominations go so far as to say you won't be saved from hell if you don't join their church! Another deception!

**Vincent on none of the rest** - Unbelievers, deterred by the fate of Ananias from uniting themselves to the church under false pretenses.

**NET Note** - The group was beginning to have a controversial separate identity. People were cautious about joining them. T

**Dared** (had courage)([5111](#))([tolmao](#) from [tólma](#) = courage) means to have courage, to be bold or to dare to do something. **BDAG** says "to show boldness or resolution in the face of danger, opposition, or a problem." To be courageous enough to join this fellowship in which 2 people had just died! The only other use of [tolmao](#) in Acts is in Acts 7:32 when Moses upon seeing the burning bush "shook with fear and would not **venture** (dare) to look."

**Associate** (join) ([2853](#))([kollao](#) from [kolla](#) = glue) means literally to glue, cement, join or fasten together and thus to unite (someone with or to someone or some thing). To fasten firmly together. In 1 Cor 6:17 [kolla](#) describes one "who **joins** himself to the Lord" and as a result is "one spirit with Him."

**Vincent on associate** (join) - In all but two instances (Ro 12:9; 1 Cor 6:17), the word implies a forced, unnatural, or unexpected union. Thus Philip would not, without a special command, have "joined himself" to the chariot of the Ethiopian prince (Acts 8:29). Saul's attempt to join himself to the apostles was regarded by them with suspicion (Acts 9:26); and the fact that certain persons "clave to" Paul in Athens is expressly contrasted with the attitude of the citizens at large. The sense of an unnatural union comes out



clearly in 1 Corinthians 6:16. (Note on Luke 15:15 = The verb means to glue or cement. Very expressive here, implying that he forced himself upon the citizen, who was unwilling to engage him, and who took him into service only upon persistent entreaty. "The unhappy wretch is a sort of appendage to a strange personality" -Godet)

**However, the people held them in high esteem** - The **people** is Jews. These were still days in which Christians were esteemed by the Jews. That would soon change as the church grew. Today a mention of that you are a Christian to a Jew does not necessarily garner you high esteem!

**Held in high esteem** (3170)(**megaluno** from **megas** - great) to make or declare great. Most commonly in the NT it means to magnify or praise (Luke 1:46; Acts 5:13; 10:46; 19:17; 2 Cor. 10:15; Phil. 1:20; Sept.: 2 Sa 7:26; Ps. 34:3; 69:31). In Acts 10:46 it describes exalting God and in Acts 19:17 of magnifying the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Acts 5:14 And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number,**

KJV Acts 5:14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.

NET Acts 5:14 More and more believers in the Lord were added to their number, crowds of both men and women.

- **And all the more believers in the Lord** Acts 2:41,47; 4:4; 6:7; 9:31,35,42; Isa 44:3-5; 45:24; 55:11-13
- **multitudes** Acts 8:3,12; 9:2; 22:4; Ex 35:22; Dt 29:11,12; 31:11,12; 2 Samuel 6:19; Ezra 10:1; Neh 8:2; 1 Cor 11:11,12; Gal 3:28
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **GROWING NOT DECREASING AS ONE MIGHT EXPECT IN LIGHT OF GOD'S JUDGMENT**

**And all the more believers in the Lord** - Everyone is a "believer" (in something or someone) but not everyone is a believer **"in the Lord."**

**Believers** is the verb **pisteuo** (present tense = continually believe = ongoing action) describing the Jews who had been persuaded that Jesus was their divine Messiah and Redeemer and so placed their confidence or trust in Him, signifying their reliance in Him for their eternal salvation. Remember that to "believe" does not to just ask Jesus into your heart (a phrase not actually in the Bible), but as **W E Vine** says it is "(1) a firm conviction which produces full acknowledgment of God's revelation of Truth - (2Thes 2:11 -"in order that they all may be judged who did not **believe** [pisteuo] the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness."), (2) a personal surrender to the Truth (Jn 1:12 "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who **believe** [pisteuo] in His name") and (3) a conduct inspired by and consistent with that surrender." Ultimately, one is shown to be a believer in the Lord, but a changed life (not perfection but "direction"). If a person "asks Jesus into their heart" and subsequently demonstrates no evidence of a changed life, it is likely they are a professor, but not a possessor. Some would refer to this as **"Easy Believism."**

**Multitudes of men and women** - Note that Luke no longer gives a specific number added but clearly this was a significant influx. Earlier Luke had given specific numbers of those saved as "about 3000 souls" (Acts 2:41) and "and the number of the men came to be about 5000." (Acts 4:4).

**Multitudes** (4128)(**plethos** from **pletho** = to fill - gives us English "plethora") means fullness or magnitude. is also used to express quantity, size, or number of something, e.g., an amount of money or length of time. In classic Greek it had the basic meaning of multitude. In the Gospels and Acts **plethos** usually means a quantity (of people). A **bundle** of sticks in Acts 28:3. **Plethos** describes the descendants of Abraham as like the stars of heaven in **number**. (Heb 11:12) Figurative used in James 5:20, 1 Peter 4:8 to describe a **"multitude** of sins."

**Vine** - "a large company, a multitude," is used (a) of things: of fish, Luke 5:6; John 21:6; of sticks ("bundle"), Acts 28:3; of stars and of sand, Heb. 11:12; of sins, Jas. 5:20; 1 Pet. 4:8; (b) of persons, (1) a "multitude:" of people, e.g., Mark 3:7, 8; Luke 6:17; John 5:3; Acts 14:1; of angels, Luke 2:13; (2) with the article, the whole number, the "multitude," the populace, e.g., Luke 1:10; Luke 8:37; Acts 5:16; Acts 19:9; Acts 23:7; a particular company, e.g., of disciples, Luke 19:37; Acts 4:32; Acts 6:2, 5; Acts 15:30; of elders, priests, and scribes, Acts 23:7; of the Apostles and the elders of the Church in Jerusalem, Acts 15:12.

**Gingrich** -

1. quantity or number Heb 11:12.

2. large number, multitude—

a. of things w. gen. Lk 5:6; bundle Acts 28:3; host James 5:20.—

b. of persons

— crowd, throng, host Mk 3:7f; Lk 2:13; 6:17; Ac 5:14; 21:36.

— a meeting, assembly Lk 23:1; Ac 23:7.

— people, populace, population Lk 8:37; Ac 2:6; 5:16; 14:4; 25:24.

— community, church, fellowship Lk 1:10; 19:37; Ac 4:32; 6:5; 15:12, 30; 19:9.

**Plethos** - 30x in 30v - assembly(1), body(1), bundle(1), congregation(4), crowd(3), great number(1), multitude(7), multitudes(1), number(1), number of people(2), people(6), quantity(1), throng(1).

Mk. 3:7; Mk. 3:8; Lk. 1:10; Lk. 2:13; Lk. 5:6; Lk. 6:17; Lk. 8:37; Lk. 19:37; Lk. 23:1; Lk. 23:27; Jn. 5:3; Jn. 21:6; Acts 2:6; Acts 4:32; Acts 5:14; Acts 5:16; Acts 6:2; Acts 6:5; Acts 14:1; Acts 14:4; Acts 15:12; Acts 15:30; Acts 19:9; Acts 21:36; Acts 23:7; Acts 25:24; Acts 28:3; Heb. 11:12; Jas. 5:20; 1 Pet. 4:8

**Plethos** is used over 250x in the Septuagint so here are only uses in the Pentateuch - "Multiplied sacrifices" (Isa 1:11)

Gen. 16:10; Gen. 17:4; Gen. 27:28; Gen. 30:30; Gen. 32:12; Gen. 36:7; Gen. 48:16; Gen. 48:19; Exod. 1:9; Exod. 8:24; Exod. 12:6; Exod. 15:7; Exod. 19:21; Exod. 23:2; Exod. 32:13; Exod. 36:5; Lev. 25:36; Num. 32:1; Deut. 1:10; Deut. 10:22; Deut. 26:5; Deut. 28:47; Deut. 28:62;

**John Stott** - This paradoxical situation has often recurred since then. The presence of the living God, whether manifest through preaching or miracles or both, is alarming to some and appealing to others. Some are frightened away, while others are drawn to faith.

**Bob Utley** - Luke often used summary statements of the growth of the church (cf. Acts 2:47; 5:14; 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20).

**Were constantly added to their number** - **Added** is in the imperfect tense describing the addition of new believers as ongoing (over and over, again and again). **Added** is in the passive voice which in this context is the [divine passive](#), signifying this was not just folks joining a physical church but souls being saved and added to the Body of Christ by God Himself. Recall that the divine passive signifies God (unexpressed) is the subject carrying out the action.

**Constantly added** (4369) ([prostithēmi](#) from from **prós** = to or besides + **títhēmi** = to put) means to put to and so to add to a number already present. Luke had used this same verb in Acts 2:41 describing that "there were **added** about three thousand souls" and again in Acts 2:47 where "the Lord **was adding** to their number day by day those who were being saved." (Both of these uses are also "divine passives.")

**Acts 5:15 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.**

KJV Acts 5:15 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.

- **they even carried the sick out into the streets** Acts 19:11,12; Mt 9:21; 14:36; John 14:12
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**To such an extent that they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets**- Who is they? In context Acts 5:14 describes believers who were added to the church, so here the pronoun "they" would refer to believers. They obviously had confidence that the sick could be healed.

**Gilbrant** suggests "They believed the Lord would honor Peter's faith and theirs even if Peter was not able to stop and lay hands on each one of them."

**Carried out** (1627) ([ekphero](#) from **ek** = out + **phero** = carry, bear) means literally to bear or carry out (Acts 5:6, 9, 10, 5:15). Bring out, lead (Mk 8:23). Bring forth, in the sense of growth, as the ground or earth "bears out" plants (Heb 6:8, Ge 1:12). This verb is

used 4 times in Acts 5 - Acts 5:6; Acts 5:9; Acts 5:10; Acts 5:15 in situations that were striking contrasts - Acts 5:6, 9, 10 referring to carrying out the corpses of A&S and here of course carrying out the sick.

**Sick** (772)([asthenes](#)) describes those who were without strength and powerless to help themselves.

**So that** (hina) - Term of purpose

**Constable** - Even today some people in the Orient superstitiously believe that a person's shadow carries his power. Eastern parents have pulled their children away from the shadow of a wicked person and thrust them into the shadow of an honored individual. The action of these first century Near Easterners shows their respect for Peter who had the power to heal. These signs and wonders authenticated the apostles as Jesus and God's representatives (cf. 19:11-12; Matt. 10:8).

**John Stott** - Their action may have been somewhat superstitious, but I see no reason to condemn it as tantamount to belief in magic, any more than was the woman's faith that a touch of the hem of Jesus' garment would be enough to heal her. No, the people had been deeply impressed by the words and works of Peter, had recognized him as a man of God and an apostle of Christ, and believed that through close proximity to him they could be healed. (Ibid)

**John MacArthur** - The streets of Jerusalem were an incredible sight. Everywhere there were beds occupied by rich and poor alike, all waiting for the apostles to move through town. The inhabitants of Jerusalem actually believed that Peter's shadow could heal. Some ancient peoples believed that a man's shadow carried his influence, so parents would place their children into the shadow of great men and snatch them away from the shadow of someone they disliked. The text doesn't say that Peter's shadow healed anyone, only that the people believed so. Their actions display a tremendous respect for Peter. Great miracles indeed occurred.

Miracles were common during this time as a way to authenticate the word of the apostles because there was no New Testament text to which one could refer.

**Bob Utley** adds that "these miracle signs were given to (1) show the compassion of God, (2) show the truth of the Gospel and (3) show who were the God-called leaders. These signs were given in a particular culture, for a specific purpose. Because God did it there, it does not automatically mean that He will do the same in every period of history in every culture. Not that God is not active in every age nor less compassionate, but that the people of God must walk by faith and not by sight! Miracles continue, but salvation of sinners must be the greatest goal, not physical healing for those who will still die! It seems to me that God has not changed. His character, power, compassion, and desire for all to be saved remains the same, but looking at history theologically, there are two major periods of intense, supernatural signs, both from God and from Satan -- (1) surrounding the time of the incarnation and development of the early church and (2) preceding the end-time events when believers will be under terrible persecution.

**When Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on any one of them** - Note that Luke does not say specifically that they were healed by Peter's shadow, but the implication is that they were (cf Acts 5:16 - **all being healed**). How they were healed is not stated by Luke the physician. If a touch of Jesus' clothing healed a woman (Lk 8:44), nothing prohibits God from using a **shadow** to heal. God can do whatever He pleases even when it defies human logic (Jer 32:27). The practice of placing the sick in Peter's may have been a superstition, because one source says "In the ancient world many people believed that a person's shadow could possess magical healing powers." (Nelson Study Bible).

**Barrett** is correct in pointing out that "It is not the effect of Peter's shadow but of the presence and power of God which Peter represented."

**Might fall** (1982)([episkiazo](#) from **epi** = upon + **skia** = shadow) "literally, as darkening by partially blocking out a source of light" (Friberg) and so to throw a shadow, here to throw a shadow upon the sick. This rare verb is used in Mt 17:5, Mk 9:7 and Lk 9:34 of the transfiguration in which the cloud overshadowed the Peter, John and James. In Lk 1:35 **episkiazo** describes "the Most High" overshadowing Mary when the Spirit came upon her with power. John Stott writes ""It may be significant that the verb **episkiazo**, which Luke chooses, meaning 'to overshadow', he has used twice in his Gospel of the overshadowing of God's presence."

**Robertson** - There was, of course, no virtue or power in Peter's shadow. That was faith with superstition, of course, just as similar cases in the Gospels occur (Matthew 9:20; Mark 6:56; John 9:5) and the use of Paul's handkerchief (Acts 19:12). God honors even superstitious faith if it is real faith in him. Few people are wholly devoid of superstition.

**Marshall** agrees with **Robertson** writing "The idea that shadows had magical powers, both beneficent and malevolent, was current in the ancient world and explains the motivation of the people."

Luke describes a similar unusual mode of healing in Acts 19...

God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even

carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out.(Acts 19:11,12)

**Comment:** The purpose of the miracles was to authenticate Paul's message (Acts 19:10). Notice Who was performing the miracles? God. Paul was simply His "chosen instrument" (Acts 9:15).

**MacArthur** makes an excellent point that "the absence of a written New Testament by which to measure someone's teaching, God used signs and wonders to authenticate His message (2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3-4; cf. Acts 2:22)....The idea that healing power could be so magically transmitted was prevalent in the ancient world (cf. Matt. 9:21)" (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Acts)

Mark records a similar description in Jesus' healing ministry...

When they had crossed over they came to land at Gennesaret, and moored to the shore. 54When they got out of the boat, immediately the people recognized Him, 55 and ran about that whole country and began to carry here and there on their pallets those who were sick, to the place they heard He was. 56 Wherever He entered villages, or cities, or countryside, they were laying the sick in the market places, and imploring Him **that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak; and as many as touched it were being cured.** (Mark 6:53–56)

We see a another description in Mt 9:20-22

And a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years, came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak; 21 for she was saying to herself, "If I only touch His garment, I will get well." 22 But Jesus turning and seeing her said, "Daughter, take courage; your faith has made you well." At once the woman was made well.

**Comment:** Don't misunderstand what Jesus says. He is not saying that faith did the healing. Ultimately God did the healing and He also gave her the faith which "was the divinely appointed means for her bodily healing, as well as for her spiritual salvation." (ESV Study Bible)

**Acts 5:16 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.**

KJV Acts 5:16 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.

- **bringing people who were sick** Mt 4:24; 8:16; 15:30,31; Mark 2:3,4; 6:54-56; John 14:12
- **they were all being healed** Acts 4:30; Mark 16:17,18; Luke 5:17; 9:11; 1 Cor 12:9; James 5:16
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## MULTITUDES COME ALL HEALED

**Also the people** (plethos = crowd, multitude) **from the cities in the vicinity** ([perix](#) = around, only here) **of Jerusalem were coming together** - Notice it does not describe these as believers. But much like with Jesus (cf Lk 5:15), the word was out that healing and exorcisms were being performed by Jesus' apostles. **Were coming** together is imperfect tense describing them as coming one after another, a steady stream of sick folks. This is the first mention of the Gospel work spreading beyond the city of Jerusalem. Notice in this case, the people were being brought to the apostles. However Jesus' charge in Acts 1:8+ was that the apostles would go forth "both **in Jerusalem**, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." But in Acts 8:1 God would allow persecution and force them to go forth from Jerusalem.

Luke the physician makes a clear distinction between **those who were sick** and those who were **afflicted with unclean spirits**. Thus Luke distinguishes those demonically afflicted from those affected by ordinary maladies (cf Acts 8:7).

**Bringing people who were sick** - **Bringing** (phero) is in the present tense picturing a continuing stream of sick and oppressed coming into the city. **Sick** is [asthenes](#) (a = neg + **sthenes** = strong) meaning literally without strength, powerless, which is why others had to bring them to the apostles. **Asthenes** describes one's state of limited capacity to do or be something and is used literally of physical weakness (most of the uses in the Gospels) and figuratively of weakness in the spiritual arena (weak flesh, weak conscience, weak religious system or commandment [Gal 4:9, Heb 7:18], etc) and thus powerless to produce results spiritually. While the primary meaning in this context is physical, all were also spiritually helpless. One wonders how many of these were in the multitudes in Acts 5:14.

**J Vernon McGee** - May I compare this to modern faith healing? Modern faith healers never heal all the people who come to them. Have you ever noticed that? The apostles had sign gifts, friend. No one in the church since then has had those gifts. People were healed, every one of them. They emptied the hospitals. This was the power of the early church. We must remember that at that time there was no written New Testament. The church is built on Jesus Christ—He is the Cornerstone—and the apostles were witnesses to Christ. The sign gifts were given to them to demonstrate the fact that they spoke with God's authority, Today we have a written New Testament as our authority.

**Afflicted with unclean spirits** - A separate group from those with pure physical sicknesses. The majority of the sick were not demon possessed! Evil (demonic) spirits were afflicting them. **Afflicted** is the verb **ochleo** found only here in NT and in the present tense means they were continually being troubled, disturbed, tormented, harassed. (See Utley's topic - [Demonic or Unclean Spirits](#))

**Robertson** adds that **ochleo** meant "to excite a mob (ochlos) against one, to trouble, annoy. Old word, only here in the N.T., though **enochleo** in Luke 6:18+. ("those who **were troubled** with unclean spirits were being cured.)."

**Unclean** (169)(**akathartos** from **a** = without + **kathairo** = cleanse from **katharos** = clean, pure, free from the adhesion of anything that soils, adulterates, corrupts, in an ethical sense, free from corrupt desire, sin, and guilt; related = **akatharsia**) in a moral sense refers to that which is unclean in thought, word, and deed. It can describe a state of moral impurity, especially sexual sin and the word *foul* is an excellent rendering. Akathartos is frequently associated with sexual sin, referring to immoral thoughts, passions, ideas, fantasies, and every other form of sexual corruption! An ugly word to be sure! It is not surprising that this word is repeatedly applied to filthy demonic spirits in the Gospels.

**Akathartos** - 30x in the NT - note most of the uses in the Gospels refers to unclean spirits.

Matt. 10:1; Matt. 12:43; Mk. 1:23; Mk. 1:26; Mk. 1:27; Mk. 3:11; Mk. 3:30; Mk. 5:2; Mk. 5:8; Mk. 5:13; Mk. 6:7; Mk. 7:25; Mk. 9:25; Lk. 4:33; Lk. 4:36; Lk. 6:18; Lk. 8:29; Lk. 9:42; Lk. 11:24; Acts 5:16; Acts 8:7; Acts 10:14; Acts 10:28; Acts 11:8; 1 Co. 7:14; 2 Co. 6:17; Eph. 5:5; Rev. 16:13; Rev. 17:4; Rev. 18:2

**Guzik** comments "We shouldn't miss the connection between the purity preserved in the first part of the chapter (with the death of Ananias and the fear of God among the Christians) and the power displayed here. God blessed a pure church with spiritual power."

#### **Related Resources:**

- [What does the Bible say about demonic oppression?](#)
- [How can demonic strongholds be overcome?](#)
- [How much emphasis should be given to demonic deliverance in the Christian life?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about demonic/satanic miracles?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about demon possession / demonic possession?](#)
- [Is there activity of demonic spirits in the world today?](#)
- [Questions about Angels & Demons](#)
- [Can a Christian today perform an exorcism? What does the Bible say about casting out demons?](#)
- [What are territorial spirits?](#)
- [How do we distinguish a psychological disorder from demon possession?](#)

**And they were all being healed** - **All** means there were no exceptions - it does not mean some healed, some not healed. **Being healed** is in the imperfect tense picturing the healing as one after another, one at a time, again and again! **Being healed** is passive voice, almost certainly indicating a [divine passive](#), which signified this was a work of God's Spirit. This must have been quite a scene to behold!

Now while all were being healed physically, this does not indicate that all were being healed in the more important way -- spiritually. As **Bob Utley** rightly says "Physical healing is a poor substitute for spiritual salvation. Miracles are only truly helpful if they bring us to God."

**Therapeuo** is used in a parallel passage in Acts 8:7 Luke recording that "in the case of many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out of them shouting with a loud voice; and many who had been paralyzed and lame were **healed**."

**Healed** (cured)(2323)(**therapeuo** from **therapon** = an attendant, servant - Eng = "therapy, therapeutic") originally meant primarily to serve, to care for, to wait upon, minister to. In the NT, it can speak of rendering service (Acts 17:25) but more often it describes rendering medical aid, taking care of the sick, healing the sick (Mt. 4:24; 12:10; Mark 1:34; Luke 6:7; 10:9). Therapeuō can mean to heal miraculously as in Mt 4:23, 24; 10:1, 8; Acts 4:14.

Most of the uses of **therapeuo** are in the synoptic Gospels and describe Jesus' healing ministry.

Matt. 4:23; Matt. 4:24; Matt. 8:7; Matt. 8:16; Matt. 9:35; Matt. 10:1; Matt. 10:8; Matt. 12:10; Matt. 12:15; Matt. 12:22; Matt. 14:14; Matt. 15:30; Matt. 17:16; Matt. 17:18; Matt. 19:2; Matt. 21:14; Mk. 1:34; Mk. 3:2; Mk. 3:10; Mk. 6:5; Mk. 6:13; Lk. 4:23; Lk. 4:40; Lk. 5:15; Lk. 6:7; Lk. 6:18; Lk. 7:21; Lk. 8:2; Lk. 8:43; Lk. 9:1; Lk. 9:6; Lk. 10:9; Lk. 13:14; Lk. 14:3; Jn. 5:10; Acts 4:14; Acts 5:16; Acts 8:7; Acts 17:25; Acts 28:9; Rev. 13:3; Rev. 13:12

**Acts 5:17 But the high priest rose up, along with all his associates (that is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with jealousy.**

KJV Acts 5:17 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,

NET Acts 5:17 Now the high priest rose up, and all those with him (that is, the religious party of the Sadducees), and they were filled with jealousy.

- **he high priest rose up** Acts 4:26; Ps 2:1-3; John 11:47-49; 12:10,19
- **along with all his associates** Acts 4:1,2,6; 23:6-8
- **they were filled with jealousy** Acts 7:9; 13:45; 17:5; 1 Sa 18:12-16; Job 5:2; Pr 14:30; 27:4; Eccl 4:4; Mt 27:18; Gal 5:21; James 3:14-16; 4:5; 1 Peter 2:1
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## FILLED WITH JEALOUSY

**But the high priest rose up, along with all his associates (that is the sect of the Sadducees)- Rose up** means to stand up, so presumably they were seated, but this news caused them to get out of their chairs. The high priest and most of the Council (Sanhedrin) were Sadducees (cf Acts 4:1).

**Sect** (139)(**haireisis** from **haireo** = to choose, elect, prefer) denotes a choosing or choice. It came to mean an opinion chosen or a tenet (a principle, belief, or doctrine generally held to be true) and then a sect, party or faction that held tenets distinctive to it.

**Robertson** observes that **haireisis** "is applied here to the Sadducees; to the Pharisees in Acts 15:5; Acts 26:5; to the Christians in Acts 24:5-14; Acts 28:22. Already Luke has stated that the Sadducees started the persecution of Peter and John (Acts 4:1-2). Now it is extended to "the apostles" as a whole since Christianity has spread more rapidly in Jerusalem than before it began."

In the Gospels, the main adversaries of Jesus were the Pharisees, but in Acts, the main adversaries were the Sadducees.

**Sadducees** (4523) (**saddoukaiois**) were the anti-supernaturalists (no angelic or demonic spirits, no resurrection, etc) who wanted to maintain their political ties with Rome. They were the religious and political liberals of the day and made up most of priests and their primary concerns were for the operation of the temple and the interpretation of the Law. "These **theological liberals** were the first to persecute the church." (MacArthur)

### Related Resources:

- [What are the differences between the Sadducees and Pharisees?](#)
- [Who were the Sadducees?](#)
- [What are the different sects of Judaism?](#)

Apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit. Ananias and Sapphira with the unholy spirit. Now Sadducees with the a jealous spirit (surely energized by the "unholy spirit" Satan)

I like **Wiersbe's** title for this section - "Truth and Consequences!"

**William MacDonald** - True Holy Spirit ministry invariably leads to conversion on the one hand and bitter opposition on the other. (BBC)

**And they were filled with jealousy** - As we have stated so many times elsewhere, what "fills you" will end up "controlling you!" Here the high priest and the Sadducees were controlled by their jealousy and this negative attitude resulted in a negative reaction.

Husbands, wives, be careful what fills you lest it break forth in a negative reaction which may incite a return negative reaction. So what's the antidote? One thing. One Power. One Person. Be continually filled with and supernaturally controlled by the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18+).

**Moody Bible Commentary** - Jealousy is "intense envy over the successes of another" more capable than one's self, and often includes the sense of fear at being displaced by someone else in the affections or esteem of those important to a person. The apostles were popular, and the Sadducees were not. (**Ed**: Have you ever experienced this feeling toward another believer? Are you experiencing it now? Then confess and repent, for jealousy is an ugly sin that often hatches into a more sinister sin!)

**Were filled** (4092)(**pimplemi**) can describe literal filling in a spatial sense (Mt 22:10, Lk 5:7) but here is used figuratively of the Sadducees who were wholly affected, controlled and influenced by their jealousy of the apostles, similar to the reaction of the Jews in Acts 13:45 who saw the crowds and "were filled with (pimplemi) jealousy (zelos)." Luke has used pimplemi to describe positive "fillings" - Acts 2:4 = "with the Holy Spirit," Acts 3:10 = "with wonder and amazement," Acts 4:8 = "with the Holy Spirit," Acts 4:31 = "with the Holy Spirit" (cf Acts 9:17, 13:9 describing Saul)." In Acts 19:29 the "city was filled with confusion" resulting in a "mob scene!"

## **THE LEADERS WERE "BOILING OVER"**

**Jealousy** (2205)(**zelos** from **zeo** = to be hot, to boil [from the sound of bubbling water], figuratively to be fervent or show great enthusiasm; related **zeoo**; **zelotes**) was originally a good word which described fervor in advancing a cause or in rendering service (**zealous**). In the present context **zelos** is an ugly word for these "religious Jews" were motivated by their fleshly envy. They thought the crowds should be around them, not these country bumpkins from Galilee who had never had formal theological training (cf Acts 4:13) and were followers of a "blasphemer!"

A synonym for **jealousy** is **envy** and even Pilate recognized this evil emotion at play in the cry of the Jews for Jesus' crucifixion, "For he (PILATE) knew that because of **envy** (**phthonos**) they had handed Him over." (Mt 27:18).

**Wiersbe** on why the Sanhedrin would be envious of the apostles - The traditions of the fathers had not attracted that much attention or gained that many followers in such a short time. It is amazing how much envy can be hidden under the disguise of "*defending the faith!*" ([Wiersbe Commentary on Acts](#))

As mentioned above, **zelos** is used in Acts 13:45 Luke recording that "when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with **jealousy** (THEIR EMOTION) and (THEIR REACTION) began contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were blaspheming."

**NET Note** on **zelos** in this verse - It is a key term in Judaism for religiously motivated rage.

**James Montgomery Boice** writes that "They were jealous of Jesus because it was His Name, rather than theirs, that was being proclaimed. They were also jealous of the apostles because they were preaching powerfully and doing miracles and because people were following them. The religious leaders wanted both of these things: They wanted to be well known, to have a "name" among the people; and they wanted people to follow them. Many of our contemporaries, even ministers, want to be well known and have a following. Much of the evil in the world happens as a result of jealousy. It is seldom given that name, of course. Still, when attacks are made on those who are being much used by God it is usually jealousy that lies behind it. People resent the fact that someone else is getting the attention."

**John Phillips** - Imagine the high priest, supposedly the spiritual leader of Israel, infuriated because sick people were being healed and because Satan's hold over peoples' lives was being broken. **Truly no hatred is like religious hatred.** The Holy Spirit was giving the leaders of Israel the signs they always craved, and the response was fury. Truly the nation was ripe for judgment. Nor was this simply the high priest. This was the entire Sadducean leadership of the Sanhedrin. Nor was it just personal spite. It was organized, deliberate opposition to the truth and grace of God. (Exploring Acts) (Bolding added)

**Bock** makes an interesting point - "The Sadducees are often seen as more hostile to the new movement than the Pharisees in Acts, whereas in Luke's Gospel the Pharisees are major opponents of Jesus. This fits the shift of attention to Jerusalem from the setting of Jesus's ministry outside the city. The Sadducees have more to lose, since they control the council and have worked out a compromise with the Romans to share power."

**G Campbell Morgan** rightly reminds us that even in our day ""Sadduceeism is rampant, so is Pharisaism; they are represented today by **rationalism** and **ritualism**. These are the opponents of living, vital Christianity today, just as they were in Jerusalem."

## Acts 5:18 They laid hands on the apostles and put them in a public jail.

KJV Acts 5:18 And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.

- Acts 4:3; 8:3; 12:5-7; 16:23-27; Luke 21:12; 2 Cor 11:23; Heb 11:36; Rev 2:10
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### GOSPEL HEALERS LOCKED UP LIKE COMMON CRIMINALS!

As Peter would write (from experience) years later

Beloved, **do not be surprised** ([present imperative with a negative](#) = stop action already in process or do not let it begin) at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; (1 Peter 4:12+).

The jealousy of the Sadducees convinced them that they needed to an end to this new movement once and for all! They would begin with imprisonment and then consider their fate. Undoubtedly some members favored killing them (because these were the same ones who had killed Jesus), although the text is silent.

**They laid hands on the apostles** - The Greek text of this sentence is literally "**AND** they laid hands on..." You ask "So what?" As just noted above, **jealousy** filled them and controlled them, motivating their flesh to take action. So the '**AND**' logically connects their attitude ("cause") in Acts 5:17 with their action ("effect") in Acts 5:18. That's usually how jealousy works! It does not generally fill a person and remain "dormant" so to speak, but usually incites the jealous party to some type of action (usually with negative consequences)! We have all probably "been there, done that," haven't we? Jealousy is a nasty little emotion which is not easily tamed. It needs to be confessed quickly before it wreaks havoc in our relationships.

Who is "**they**"? While this could be the temple "police," (cf Acts 5:22,23) the nearest antecedent is the Sadducees. They may have been so furious that they took matters into their own hands. This is interesting (regardless of who arrested the apostles) because the religious leaders did not dare arrest Jesus during the day (for fear of the crowds), but here the arrest is in broad daylight! They leaders must have been "**stewing**" to make such a move.

In Mk 14:46 the same verb (epiballo) is used to describe the religious crowd's reaction to Jesus = "they**laid hands on** (epiballo) Him." Jesus had prophesied that "if they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you...but all these things they will do to you for My Name's sake, because they do not know the One Who sent Me." (Jn 15:20-21) His prophetic words were beginning to be fulfilled!

**Wiersbe** observes that here we see "the age-old conflict between living truth and dead tradition. The new wine could not be put into the old wineskins nor could the new cloth be sewn on the worn-out garments (Mt 9:14-17). The English martyr **Hugh Latimer** said, "Whenever you see persecution, there is more than a probability that truth is on the persecuted side." ([Wiersbe Commentary on Acts](#))

**And put them in a public jail** - The apostles apparently give no resistance to the arrest. And given their popularity with the people at this time, they could have organized a protest, but they did not. And keep in mind that they are going before the very ones who had Jesus crucified, so this is not with some life and death implications! This time it is not just Peter and John who are arrested and put in jail, but all 12 apostles. One wonders if they harmonized hymns in jail like Paul and Silas in the jail at Philippi (Acts 16:25+)? The arrest with the whole crowd looking on. Think about this for a moment -- what would be the effect of this arrest on the disciples looking on? Fear? Intimidation? Hesitancy about sharing the Gospel? We cannot state with certainty because the text does not say, but when the crowd saw them the next day preaching again they were surely emboldened by the apostle's Spirit enabled bold persistence in proclaiming the Gospel!

**Public** ([1219](#))(**demosios** from **demos** = people) can function as an adjective (public) or an adverb (publicly). The word means belonging to the public or for public use. **Demosios** is used as an adverb in Acts 16:37; 18:28; 20:20 meaning in a public place. There are no uses in the Septuagint.

**Jail** ([5084](#))(**teresis** from **tereo** = to keep) means the action of watching or holding in custody by metonymy prison, jail (Acts 4.3, 5:18); figuratively, of commandments and precepts, keeping them with obedience or observance ( 1 Co 7.19).

**Life Application Commentary** - DANGER! TROUBLE AHEAD! The apostles experienced power to do miracles, great boldness in preaching, and God's presence in their lives, yet they were not free from hatred and persecution. They were arrested, put in jail,



beaten, and slandered by community leaders. Faith in God does not make troubles disappear; it makes troubles appear less frightening because it puts them in the right perspective. Don't expect everyone to react favorably when you share something as dynamic as your faith in Christ. Some will be jealous, afraid, or threatened. Expect some negative reactions, and remember that you must be more concerned about serving God than about the reactions of people (see Acts 5:29). (Life Application Bible Commentary – Acts)

**Acts 5:19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the gates of the prison, and taking them out he said,**

KJV Acts 5:19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,

- Acts 12:7-11; 16:26; Ps 34:7; 105:17-20; 146:7; Isa 61:1
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **DIVINE DELIVERANCE BY AN ANGEL**

This is the first of 3 supernatural prison escapes in the book of Acts - Peter in Acts 12:6-10; Paul and Silas in Acts 16:26-27

**But** - Term of contrast. What is Luke contrasting? In one moment by the hands of men, but out the next moment by the hand of God through His messenger an angel.

In this passage we see "**Divine Deliverance**" number one. But Satan prowls around like a roaring lion seeking whom he might devour, so he is not about to give up his attempts to destroy the apostles. And so later in this chapter we see them jailed a second time. But while here in Acts 5:19 God uses a divine messenger to deliver this chosen men, in Acts 5:34-39<sup>+</sup> He raises up a human messenger to deliver the disciples in "**Divine Deliverance**" number two.

**During the night an angel of the Lord** - **During the night** indicates the apostles did not even have to spend the night in jail! Presumably they went home and got a good night's rest in preparation for their early morning preaching in the Temple! The phrase **angel of the Lord** is found in both the Old and the New Testaments. In the OT, the angel of the Lord usually refers to a **Theophany**, specifically probably a **Christophany**, or appearance of the pre-incarnate Christ.

Luke uses the phrase **angel of the Lord** 6 times (more than any other NT writer) (Lk. 1:11; Lk. 2:9; Acts 5:19; Acts 8:26; Acts 12:7; Acts 12:23). All of Luke's uses (with one possible exception) refer to a created angel, a divine spirit sent as the Lord's messenger. The one possible exception is in Acts 8:26 where the phrase "angel of the Lord" is in parallel with "the Spirit" in Acts 8:29.

Don't you love the irony here! The Sadducees did not believe angels (Acts 23:8), and yet here Luke describes an angel freeing the apostles from prison! God's Spirit has a sense of humor!

Since **angel** can mean messenger some commentators (probably those who do not accept the supernatural) interpret this as a human messenger carrying out some kind of inside job! That takes more faith to believe than the truth, because the guards in this day were fearful of losing their life if they lost a prisoner. An inside job would be virtually impossible!

**Larkin** notes that the Sadducees "who believed all history was the result of human decisions...were in for a surprise." ([IVP Commentary-Acts](#))

Have you ever been surprised by an angelic deliverance? I have but the story is too long to tell here -- ask me when we are all in glory and perhaps God will allow me to tell this God glorifying supernatural story.

Remember beloved the words of David who wrote that "The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues (Lxx = [rhuomai](#) = Draw or snatch to oneself, invariably from danger, evil or an enemy) them." (Ps 34:7)

**Paul Apple** - God holds the keys to whatever prison may be giving you problems, may be enslaving you, may be persecuting you; He has angels sufficient to minister grace and deliverance to you – whatever the depth of your dungeon

**Angel** ([32](#))([aggelos/angelos](#)) literally means a messenger (one who bears a message - Lk 1:11, 2:9, etc or does an errand). Most of the NT uses refer to heavenly angels (messengers) who are supernatural, transcendent beings with power to carry out various tasks. One exception is Acts 7:30, 35, 38 where "angel" is a reference to the [Angel of the LORD](#). All uses of **aggelos** that refer to angels are masculine gender (the feminine form of [aggelos](#) does not occur.)

Acts 5:19 is an excellent [illustration](#) of Hebrews 1:14+ where the writer asks "Are they (ANGELS) not all ministering spirits, sent out

to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?" The word "**ministering**" is [leitourgikos](#) which in Classic Greek referred especially to those who performed public duties or works of public use (public servants). The angels are literally "spirits for serving" and we see them doing so repeatedly in Acts (Acts 8:26; 10:3, 7, 22; 11:13, 12:7-11, 23; 27:23).

#### Related Resources:

- [Angel of the LORD](#)
- [What does the Bible say about angels?](#)
- [Are angels male or female?](#)
- [What are the different types of angels?](#)
- [Do we have guardian angels?](#)
- [What do angels look like?](#)
- [When did God create the angels?](#)
- [Do angels have wings?](#)
- [Do angels sing?](#)
- [Do angels have free will?](#)
- [What are the names of angels in the Bible?](#)

**Phillips** comments on this great escape - The whole transitional period was packed with supernatural happenings. God was accrediting His church to the Jewish people. The miraculous release of the prisoners was one more hammer blow at the conscience of such of the Sanhedrin as would listen. The Sadducees, who were now taking the lead in opposing Christianity, denied the supernatural. What could be more fitting than that the Holy Spirit should force them to confront it? Sadly, many were quite willing to rationalize even these multiplied and manifest miracles. If they could explain away the resurrection of Christ, no doubt they could rationalize this escape, too. (Exploring Acts)

**Opened the gates of the prison** - In Acts 12:7-11 Peter had a personal angelic encounter releasing him from prison. A third divine "jail break" is orchestrated by God in Acts 16:26, 27). "Locked doors" are nothing for God! What are the "locked doors" in your life beloved? God can open them, but in His good and acceptable and perfect will and timing does not always do so. If He does not open them that should never cause us to doubt that "God is able" to still use those "locked doors" to conform us the image of His Son Christ Jesus.

**Opened** (455) ([anoigo](#) from **ana** = again + **oigo** = to open) means to open, to open up, to open again, to give access to. Luke uses **anoigo** of another "great escape" of God's apostles from jail writing that "suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened." (Acts 16:26)

Luke's uses of **anoigo** -

Lk. 1:64; Lk. 3:21; Lk. 4:17; Lk. 11:9; Lk. 11:10; Lk. 12:36; Lk. 13:25; Acts 5:19; Acts 5:23; Acts 8:32; Acts 8:35; Acts 9:8; Acts 9:40; Acts 10:11; Acts 10:34; Acts 12:10; Acts 12:14; Acts 12:16; Acts 14:27; Acts 16:26; Acts 16:27; Acts 18:14; Acts 26:18

What happened to the guards? The text does not say, but clearly they were unaware of the "great escape," until later.

**And taking them out he said** - Put yourself in the sandals of the apostles for a moment. Prison gates creak open at the hand of an angel and they walk out free thinking "Yes, we're out of jail!" And then the angel gives instructions that would lead to further persecution (and as far as they knew possibly even death). Nevertheless, the apostles were fearless (Acts 5:21) because they were filled with the Spirit.

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**Paul Apple** - **Illustration**: A story appeared Moody Bible Institute's devotional magazine Today in the Word, (October, 1991, p. 18), the story of John Paton, who was a missionary in the New Hebrides Islands.

- One night hostile natives surrounded the mission station, intent on burning out the Patons and killing them.
- Paton and his wife prayed during that terror-filled night that God would deliver them.
- When daylight came they were amazed to see their attackers leave.
- A year later, the chief of the tribe was converted to Christ. Remembering what had happened, Paton asked the chief what had kept him from burning down the house and killing them. The chief replied in surprise, "Who were all those men with you there?"
- Paton knew no men were present--but the chief said he was afraid to attack because he had seen hundreds of big men in shining garments with drawn swords circling the mission station.

This story sounds eerily like the story of Elisha and his servant in 2 Kings 6, when the King of Syria sends an army to capture Elisha.

- Elisha's servant wakes up early in the morning and sees chariots and horses surrounding their home.
- He runs to Elisha and says, "we're surrounded! We're dead!" Elisha says, "oh no, we outnumber them (servant; two of us?). Elisha prays, "Lord, open his eyes!" And we learn, "Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha." (v. 17).

The point is, "If we could only see the angels. If we would only see all the chariots."

- Maybe we would face life with more confidence in God. Confidence that God is in control. -- Mark Strauss

[Guzik](#) has an interesting note regarding the divine deliverance of the apostles on this occasion but then the divine homecoming (so to speak) after their job was finished. The links added are from Wikipedia and obviously are not inspired, so must be read with a proverbial "grain of (Berean) salt!" **Guzik** writes "The later history of these apostles – and others associated with them in the early church – shows that sometimes God delivers by a miracle, sometimes He does not. According to fairly reliable church history and tradition, miraculous angels did not always deliver them.

- [Matthew](#) was beheaded with a sword.
- [Mark](#) died in Alexandria after being dragged through the streets of the city.
- [Luke](#) was hanged on an olive tree in Greece.
- [John](#) died a natural death, but they unsuccessfully tried to boil him in oil.
- [Peter](#) was crucified upside-down in Rome.
- [James](#) was beheaded in Jerusalem.
- [James](#) the Less was thrown from a height then beaten with clubs.
- [Philip](#) was hanged.
- [Bartholomew](#) was whipped and beaten until death.
- [Andrew](#) was crucified and preached at the top of his voice to his persecutors until he died.
- [Thomas](#) was run through with a spear.
- [Jude](#) was killed with the arrows of an executioner.
- [Matthias](#) was stoned and then beheaded – as was Barnabas.
- [Paul](#) was beheaded in Rome.

This reminds us that we should trust God for miraculous things and wish to see them more and more; but knowing that He also has a purpose when He does not deliver with a miraculous hand. We also see that we, like the apostles, are set free for a purpose – not merely to live for ourselves. ([Acts 5 Commentary](#))

## Our Great Deliverer

Read: Acts 5:17-32

An angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought [the apostles] out. —Acts 5:19

Margaret Nikol was born into a pastor's family in Bulgaria. Her mother and father were murdered for their faith by the communists in the 1960s. Margaret was a brilliant violinist, and in spite of opposition she got an excellent education. She achieved fame throughout Europe and became concertmaster of the Dresden Symphony. But because of her faith in Christ, she was subjected to physical and emotional cruelty. Eventually, she was given a prison sentence—to begin as soon as the concert season was over.

But God had other plans. Margaret was invited to play in Vienna at an Easter concert in 1982. The communists repeatedly denied permission, but finally, because of outside pressure, they relented. "God was faster than they were," testifies Margaret. In Vienna she requested political asylum, and no less than five free nations offered it! Today, Margaret Nikol travels all over the world in behalf of a growing ministry in Bulgaria.

The same God who delivered Margaret from communist oppression, and who sent an angel to free the apostles from prison (Acts 5:19), can also rescue us from whatever is holding us captive—physically or spiritually. We must never give up hope! God is our great deliverer.

Our God can still a raging storm  
 One word can calm an angry sea;  
 So when we put our trust in Him,  
 He breaks our chains and sets us free. —Sper

The God who holds the universe is the God who is holding you.

**Acts 5:20 "Go, stand and speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this Life."**

KJV Acts 5:20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

- **Go, stand and speak** Isa 58:1; Jer 7:2; 19:14,15; 20:2,3; 22:1,2; 26:2; 36:10; Mt 21:23; John 18:20
- **the whole message of this Life** Acts 11:14; Ex 24:3; John 6:63,68; 12:50; 17:3,8; 1 John 1:1-3; 5:11,12
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**STAND YOUR GROUND!  
SPEAK THE GOSPEL!**

The idea of the verb **stand** ([histemi](#)) while not in the imperative mood (specific command), in this context clearly is a call for the apostles to stand firm, to "[stand their ground](#)." This verb gives us a clear picture of the battle lines being drawn up, the soldiers of the Lord Jesus arrayed against the Sadducees of the Sanhedrin, the soldiers of Satan. May God by His Spirit enable all of us to "be imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises" in Christ. Amen (Heb 6:12+). Play [Stand](#) by Donnie McClurkin. Then listen to another song on standing firm, an "oldie but goodie" by the great Christian duo **Harvest** ([read their description](#))(1977-1995) - [Stand](#). Play it! It will move you to seek by the Spirit to stand firm dear soldier of the Cross of Christ!

We are in a war for souls who need to hear the message of this Life and God's call is to **stand firm...stand firm...stand firm** (all [histemi](#))

**Put on** (aorist imperative = it is urgent!) the full armor of God, so that you will be able to **stand firm** against the schemes of the devil. (Ephesians 6:11+)

Therefore, **take up** (aorist imperative = Don't delay!) the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to **stand firm**. (Ephesians 6:13+)

**Stand firm** (aorist imperative = Do it today!) therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, (Ephesians 6:14+)

**Go, stand and speak** - The commands to **go** and **speak** are both present imperatives. How can the apostles obey these commands, given that they have just been placed in jail for the Gospel? Simple answer - THEY cannot! But the Spirit of Jesus Who fills them supernaturally enabled them to keep on going and keep on speaking! There is no other way to explain it! The apostles needed to rely on the Spirit and so do we beloved. Are you attempting to go and speak in your own power or His power? The first way ("my way") avails nothing (cf Jn 15:5), while the other ("Jesus way") bears much fruit.

The angelic message delivered from the Throne of God was not "Escape" but "Explain," not "Run away," but "Run to!" And the apostles obeyed in contrast to their reaction to flee when Jesus was arrested (cf Mt 26:31, 56, Mk 14:50, Jn 20:19) What a difference a day (day of Pentecost and receipt of the Spirit) made!

**To the people in the temple**- Are they to go to Solomon's portico? Probably (see hieros below) that is what is meant because that area would hold the largest crowd of Jews. Notice that the apostles are commanded to go to Jew first (cf Ro 1:16), as that is who would be in the Temple. Ponder this for a moment -- humanly speaking, why would anyone want to return to the place that led to prison? But this is angelic speaking to supernaturally enabled men who were on mission (Acts 1:8). These men were willing to die for the Gospel. This would have (or at least should have) been a strong witness to the serpentine Sadducees that their message was worth listening to, but their hearts were hard and their necks were stiff and their resistance to the Gospel was resolute. Are we willing to die for the truth of the Gospel? (And dying to self might is more difficult than physically dying, for the latter is only once, the former is daily!)

**Temple** ("Temple courts" or "Temple complex")([2413](#)) is the Greek [hieros](#) in contrast to the [Naos](#) which refers to the **Temple proper**, (including the inner sanctuary, **Holy of Holies** and the innermost **Holy Place**). When our Lord taught in the Temple, He taught in the **hieron**, in one of the temple porches and He expelled the money-changers from the **hieron**, the court of the Gentiles. So His apostles are called to "**follow in His steps**," steps which are a sure road to suffering for His Name. (1 Pe 2:21+)

**The whole message of this Life** - With what is this a synonym? The Gospel, the message of salvation. The Good News in "this Life," that there is eternal life available to all who call upon the Life of the Lord Jesus. While not all translations capitalize "**Life**," the NAS and ESV do capitalize this word.

**Stanley Toussaint** says that the **whole message of this Life** is "an unusual way to refer to the Gospel." (BKC)

**William MacDonald** on the **whole message of this Life** - It is not just a creed or set of doctrines, but a Life—the resurrection life of the Lord Jesus imparted to all who trust Him.(BBC)

The **NIV** has "**this new life**" but "**new**" is not in the Greek. Nevertheless, it is true that the Gospel received and believed gives us "**new life**," for it is a "resurrection life." Paul wrote we have been raised so that "we too might walk innewness of life." (Ro 6:4+).

The paraphrase **God's Word Translation** has "tell the people everything about life *in Christ*." While not in the text, as a result of believing the Gospel Paul reminds us that now "Christ (is) our **life**." (Col 3:4+).

The apostle John gives us several beautiful descriptions of **LIFE** found in this **whole message** they (and we) are to proclaim...

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of**LIFE** ; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst. (John 6:35)

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the**LIFE**; no one comes to the Father but through Me. (John 14:6)

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of **LIFE**– 2 and the **LIFE** was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal **LIFE**, which was with the Father and was manifested to us– 3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.(1 John 1:1-3)

And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this**LIFE** is in His Son. (1 John 5:11)

He who has the Son has the **LIFE** ; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the**LIFE** .(1 John 5:12)

but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have **LIFE** in His name. (John 20:31)

**The ESV Study Bible** note says "The **words of this Life** means the words of salvation and eternal life. It seems that early Christianity may also have been called "the Life," as well as "the Way" (see Acts 9:1-2; **Ed**: cp Jn 14:6).

**Message** (4487)(**rhema** from verb **rheo** = to speak or utter words) refers to the spoken word, especially a word as uttered by a living voice. **Laleo** is another word translated speak but it refers only to uttering a sound whereas**rheo** refers to uttering a definite intelligible word. Thus **Rhema** refers to any sound produced by the voice which has a definite meaning. It focuses upon the content of the communication and in this context is the concrete expression of the Word (logos) of God. I love the old ASV translation of the use of **rhema** in Luke 1:37 (cf use in Mt 4:4) "For no (spoken) **word** (rhema) from God shall be void of power." Amen! This is great news and should motivate us to read, memorize and claim by faith the manifold "precious and magnificent promises" of God (2 Pe 1:4-[note](#)) which God has granted to us as His beloved children!

In Acts 11:14 Luke writes "he (Peter) will speak**words** (rhema) to you (Gentiles) by which you will be saved, you and all your household."

All of Luke's uses of **rhema** -

Lk. 1:37; Lk. 1:38; Lk. 1:65; Lk. 2:15; Lk. 2:17; Lk. 2:19; Lk. 2:29; Lk. 2:50; Lk. 2:51; Lk. 3:2; Lk. 5:5; Lk. 7:1; Lk. 9:45; Lk. 18:34; Lk. 20:26; Lk. 24:8; Lk. 24:11;Acts 2:14; Acts 5:20; Acts 5:32; Acts 6:11; Acts 10:22; Acts 10:37; Acts 10:44; Acts 11:14; Acts 11:16; Acts 13:42; Acts 16:38; Acts 26:25; Acts 28:25;

**Life** (2222)(**zoe**) in Scripture is used to refer to **physical life** (Ro 8:38-[note](#), 1Co 3:22, Php 1:20-[note](#), Jas 4:14, etc) but more often as in Acts 5:20 to **supernatural life** in contrast to a natural life subject to eternal death (Jn 3:36, etc). This supernatural quality of life speaks of fullness of life which alone belongs to God the Giver of life and is available now to His children in Whom His Son Christ lives (cf Ep 4:18-[note](#)). Life in His Son will continue forever and ever. Amen (cf Mk 10:30, Titus 1:2+).

**Jesus'** words to disciples who would soon turn away from Him (Jn 6:66) are apropos...

"It is the Spirit who gives **life** (**zoopoieo**) the flesh profits (absolutely) nothing (of eternal value); the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are **life**. (**zoe**)" (John 6:63)

1 John 1:1-3; 5:11,12

[Robertson](#) on **words of this life** - Not just a Hebraism for "all these words of life." Probably "this life" which the Sadducees deny and of which the angel is now speaking, this eternal life. (John 6:63, 68; 1 Cor. 15:19).

**Marvin Vincent** on **words of this life** - The eternal life which Christ revealed. It is a peculiar use of the phrase, which is commonly employed in contrast with the life to come, as 1 Corinthians 15:19. Compare John 6:63, 68. Not equivalent to these words of life.

As **H T Kerr** said "We are not to preach sociology, but salvation; not economics, but evangelism; not reform, but redemption; not culture, but conversion; not progress, but pardon; not a social order, but a new birth; not revolution, but regeneration; not renovation, but revival; not resuscitation, but resurrection; not a new organization, but a new creation; not democracy, but the Gospel; not civilization, but Christ; we are ambassadors, not diplomats."

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### **Ministers Must Preach the Whole Gospel - C. H. Spurgeon.**

Dear brethren, it is forbidden us to omit any part of the gospel. I am very glad it is, for if we were permitted we should sometimes shirk the unpopular parts of it. Yet surely it would be very dangerous to omit any part of the gospel, would it not? It would be like a physician giving a prescription to a dispenser, and the dispenser omitting one of the ingredients. He might kill the patient by the omission. The worst results follow the keeping back of any doctrine; we may not see those results, but they will follow. Possibly only the next generation will fully display the mischief done by a truth concealed or denied. It would be a dangerous experiment for any one of us to make.

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**COMMANDS THAT BRING CRISIS** - The angel of the Lord gave the apostles a command that, when followed, would lead to a brutal flogging. If that strikes you as odd, it is probably because of the prevailing idea among many believers that obedience inevitably leads to blessing (defined as "a problem-free, blissful existence"). Serious students of the Bible know, however, that obeying God often results in pain and suffering. They also recognize that being persecuted for Christ is a deeper kind of blessing. What biblical commands, if obeyed, might result in discomfort for you today? Will you commit to live them out anyway? (Life Application Bible Commentary – Acts)

**Acts 5:21 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.**

KJV Acts 5:21 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.

NET Acts 5:21 When they heard this, they entered the temple courts at daybreak and began teaching. Now when the high priest and those who were with him arrived, they summoned the Sanhedrin— that is, the whole high council of the Israelites— and sent to the jail to have the apostles brought before them.

- **entered** Acts 5:25; Luke 21:37,38; John 8:2
- **Now when the high priest** Acts 5:17,24; 4:5,6; 22:2,3,15; Luke 22:66; John 18:35
- **all the Senate of the sons of Israel** Ps 105:22
- **sent orders to the prison house for them to be brought** Acts 4:7; 12:18,19
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **APOSTOLIC OBEDIENCE**

**Upon hearing this** - Observe the response of the apostles -- No hesitation. No vacillation. No statements like "Maybe we should pray about it first." Sometimes God's will is obvious and our response should be simply to obey. The way to divine blessing is obedience to God. Would it be that we heard from the Lord as we prayerfully ponder His Word, that upon hearing it we would act on it!

One other note is that they had been set free at night, so it is very likely their normal [rem sleep](#) pattern was disturbed! And yet at the break of day they are about their Father's business of preaching and teaching the Gospel. They put all of us to shame.

**They entered into the temple** ([hieros](#) = Temple complex not [naos](#) = Temple proper) **about daybreak** - At the time when the Jews

would be coming for morning sacrifices, although the apostles are not going into the central area of the Temple where the actual sacrifices were performed. They were on the grounds surrounding the Temple proper, probably settling in the area of Solomon's portico as they had done before. Who should have been giving morning sacrifices? The religious leaders who passed on worshipping God, so they could gather together and plot the demise of the disciples!

**And began to teach** - The imperfect tense depicts them as teaching over and over, again and again. They were purpose driven men, or even better, "Gospel driven men." They leave us example to imitate (in the power of the Holy Spirit).

## ASSEMBLING THE SANHEDRIN

The Sanhedrin is assembling in preparation for more severe steps to be taken against the 12 ringleaders (cf Acts 5:33+). Imagine Annas and Caiaphas in all their gaudy, gorgeous finery (pix) and all their [pretension](#), [pomp](#) and circumstance. Little did they know that they were in for quite a shock!

**Now when the high priest and his associates came** - The **high priest** ([archiereus](#)) is mentioned repeatedly in this section describing the persecution of the apostles (and the church) - Acts 4:6; Acts 4:23; Acts 5:17; Acts 5:21; Acts 5:24; Acts 5:27. While persecution will always come at us from the world, sometimes the most vitriolic, violent persecution comes from religious people who have no relationship with Christ! So do not be caught off guard, especially if you are living a radical Christ life -- in fact, you will be persecuted by those who see your living for Jesus as too radical! (cf 2 Ti 3:12+) This gathering probably included Annas (the former high priest) and Caiaphas (the current high priest) (cf Acts 4:6+).

**Phillips** writes "The gathering was called to order, and, as the various members took their seats, the officers were sent to bring the prisoners. While awaiting their arrival, views were no doubt aired about the momentous decision about to be made." (Ibid)

**They called the Council together, even all the Senate of the sons of Israel**- Council and Senate are almost certainly the same entity, the Sanhedrin ([sunedrion](#)). The NET renders it "they summoned the Sanhedrin-- that is, the whole high council of the Israelites."

**Robertson** on **senate** - The senate ([tên gerousian]). From gerōn, an old man, just as the Latin senatus is from senex, old. Like the gerontes in Homer and the Elder Statesmen in Japan. Apparently the senate of the people were also part of the Sanhedrin and the use of "and" (kai) is explanatory and adds this item in particular. Page thinks that this group of elders were not members of the Sanhedrin at all.

**And sent orders to the prison house for them to be brought** - This might be a slight play on words for **sent** is the verb [apostello](#) which is the root word for apostles ([apostolos](#));, the very ones for whom they **sent**!

## APOSTLES IN BONDS

While the apostles did not have to remain long in this **prison house**, as described below in the description of **desmoterion** their time may have been quite uncomfortable for they were very likely bound in uncomfortable [stocks](#) ([picture](#)), although Luke does not say the angel released them from stocks.

**Prison house** ([1201](#))(**desmoterion** from **desmos** = bond [**deo** = to bind] + **tēreō** = to observe, keep watch upon) is the place where bound persons are watched and observed. Mt 11:2 describes John's confinement at Herod's fortress which Josephus said was located on the east side of the Dead Sea in Peraea (Josephus Wars of the Jews 7.6.1f.). Excavations indicate this dungeon was equipped with stocks which were constructed with two widely separated holes for the victim's legs to inflict great weariness and pain (i.e., torture!) In the **Septuagint desmoterion** described the place where Joseph and Samson were held.

**Desmoterion** - 4x in the NT - NAS = imprisoned(1), prison house(3) - Matt. 11:2; Acts 5:21; Acts 5:23; Acts 16:2. 7x in the **Septuagint** = Ge 39:22; 39:23; Ge 40:3, 5 ("prison" where Pharaoh confined his chief officers with Joseph); Jdg. 16:21; Jdg. 16:25; Isa. 24:22

**Vincent** - Still another word for **prison**. Compare Acts 5:18, 19. Rev., prison-house. The different words emphasize different aspects of confinement. **Teresis** is keeping, as the result of guarding. [Phulake](#) emphasizes the being put under guard, and **desmoterion** the being put in bonds.

**BDAG** - place for detention (prisons in the Roman world were ordinarily used for temporary custody to prevent escape pending sentencing, not for rehabilitation; Rom. law did not permit the chaining of free citizens)

**Zodhiates** on **desmoterion** - The prison in Jerusalem (Acts 5:18ff.) was controlled by the priests and probably attached to the high priest's palace or the temple. Paul was imprisoned at Jerusalem in the Fort Antonia (Acts 23:10); at Caesarea by the sea in Herod's Praetorium (Acts 23:35); and probably his final imprisonment was in Rome at the [Tullianum](#) dungeon or [Mamertine Prison](#) ([picture of one of the dungeons](#) - talk about claustrophobia!) consisting of a larger, oblong, upper story and a smaller, circular, underground dungeon. (Complete Word Study Dictionary – New Testament)

**Acts 5:22 But the officers who came did not find them in the prison; and they returned and reported back,**

KJV Acts 5:22 But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told,

- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **THE CAGE WAS LOCKED BUT THE BIRDS HAD FLOWN!**

**But** - Term of contrast. I would term this a "divine term of contrast" as the contrast was between the apostles in prison but divinely delivered by God, a fact that would soon become obvious.

**The officers who came did not find them in the prison**- The verb **find** ([2147](#))([heurisko](#)) means to discover after searching. One can only imagine the officers searched every square inch of the cell but to no avail. Twelve men vanished into thin air! Doors locked. Guards on duty!

**Officers** ([5257](#)) ([huperetes](#) from **hupo** = under, beneath + **eretes** = a rower) is literally and under oarsman ('under-rowers") and then a subordinate, a servant, an attendant (Lk 4:20), one who is in the service of another or an assistant in general. **Huperetes** describes a helper who willingly submits himself to carrying out the will of the one over him. In John 7:32, 45, 46 and here in Acts 5:22 **huperetes** it is used of the Temple "police" or guards representing subordinate officers who waited to accomplish the commands of their superior (in this case presumably the high priest or Sanhedrin). It is somewhat ironic that **huperetes** was used for subordinate officers in this passage, but was used elsewhere by Luke and Paul to describe the noblest of all offices, that of a minister of the Lord Jesus (Luke 1:2; Acts 26:16; 1 Cor. 4:1)!

**Vincent** on **huperetes** used most commonly with the meaning of **officer** (Mt 5:25, etc) - Denoting a subordinate official, as a herald or an orderly, and in this sense applied to Mark as the "minister" or attendant of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:5). It furnishes an interesting instance of the expansion of a word from a limited and special meaning into a more general one; and also of the influence of the Gospel in lifting words into higher and purer associations. Formed with the verb **eresso**, to row, it originally signified a rower, as distinguished from a soldier, in a war-galley.

**Prison** ([5438](#))([phulake](#) from [phulasso](#) = to guard, watch) means a guarding (the act of guarding or keeping watch - Lk 2:8, Nu 1:53, 3:7, 28) or guard (the person doing the watching - Acts 12:10) , a prison as a place where someone is guarded (Mt 5:25, 14:3, 10, 18:30, 25:36, 39, 43, etc).

**And they returned** ([anastrepho](#)) **and reported back** ([apaggello](#)) - One can only imagine their conversation on the way back to the Sanhedrin! "Who's going to break this news to the bosses?"

**Reported** (announced) ([518](#))([apaggello](#) from **apó** = from + **aggéllō** = tell, declare from **aggelos** = messenger, one who speaks in place of one who has sent him) means to bring a message from any person or place. To inform or tell what has occurred.

**Apaggello** is frequently used by Luke in the Gospel and in Acts - Lk. 7:18; Lk. 7:22; Lk. 8:20; Lk. 8:34; Lk. 8:36; Lk. 8:47; Lk. 9:36; Lk. 13:1; Lk. 14:21; Lk. 18:37; Lk. 24:9; Jn. 16:25; Acts 4:23; Acts 5:22; Acts 5:25; Acts 11:13; Acts 12:14; Acts 12:17; Acts 15:27; Acts 16:36; Acts 16:38; Acts 17:30; Acts 22:26; Acts 23:16; Acts 23:17; Acts 23:19; Acts 26:20; Acts 28:21; 1 Co. 14:25; 1 Thess. 1:9; Heb. 2:12; 1 Jn. 1:2; 1 Jn. 1:3

**Acts 5:23 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."**

KJV Acts 5:23 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.



- **We found the prison house locked** Acts 5:19; Ps 2:4; 33:10; Pr 21:30; Lam 3:37,55-58; Da 3:11-25; 6:22-24; Mt 27:63-66; 28:12-15; John 8:59
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PRISONERS VANISHED INTO THIN AIR!

**Saying, "We found the prison house locked quite securely and the guards standing at the doors-** These details make the possibility of escape unimaginably impossible! And there was not even one man of the 12 apostles who was named "[Harry Houdini!](#)"

**J Vernon McGee** observes "This is the same sort of thing that happened at the resurrection of Christ. The stone wasn't rolled away to let Jesus out; He was out before the stone was rolled away. The stone was moved to let those on the outside come in. The same thing happened here. The doors did not need to be opened to let the apostles get out. They were out long before the doors were unlocked." (Thru the Bible)

**Locked** (2808)([kleio](#)) literally means to shut, close or lock a door (after the resurrection the disciples were together and the doors were shut... for fear of the Jews = Jn 20:19, 26). Now the 12 are in fact locked behind prison doors but are no longer fearful! We can attribute this to the "Pentecost Effect!" Locked is in the perfect tense which speaks of permanence = shut tight! The picture of the perfect tense is that when the guards had locked the door, they remained locked (or so they thought!)

**Securely** (803)([asphaleia](#) from **a** = without + **sphallo** = to totter or fall) means "make no slip" and describes that which displays firmness, security, safety. It can speak of a stable circumstance (safety, security) in 1 Th 5:3 and here in Acts 5:23 is a legal technical term for keeping the prisoners securely guarded.

**Guards** (5441)([phulax](#) from [phulasso](#) = to guard) means a guard, prison keeper, sentinel. Three uses - Acts 5:23, 12:6, 19. Notice the irony of guards guarding a cell without prisoners! God has a wonderful sense of humor.

**Standing** (2476) ([histemi](#)) (5x in Acts 5 - Acts 5:20, 23, 25, 27) - The perfect tense speaks of permanence = "Graphic picture of the sentinels at the prison doors" - ATR! They took their position in front of the jail cells and remained **standing**. The idea is that the guards remained on alert. The jail door was locked tight and the guards were standing firm! These details by Luke serve to accentuate the fact that the likelihood of escape borders on impossible! For men that would be true, but not for God, for "nothing is too difficult" for our God! (Jer 32:17, 27+) What is the "door" in your life which you think God cannot open?

**But when we had opened up, we found no one inside-** Given the secure door and standing sentinels, this must have been a mind blowing experience! One wonders why they had to open up. Perhaps the doors were solid (not bars) and restricted vision through a small window.

**Toussaint** comments that "The facts recorded in these verses are filled with irony: (1) The guards were carefully keeping empty jail cells secured (Acts 5:21b-23). (2) The highest powers of Israel were gathered to judge prisoners they did not have. (3) While the frenzied leaders were deliberating as to what had happened to the men who had been in their custody, they were told the apostles were preaching in the courts of the temple." (BKC)

**Acts 5:24 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.**

KJV Acts 5:24 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.

- **Now when the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests heard these words** Acts 5:26; 4:1; Luke 22:4,52
- **They were greatly perplexed** Acts 2:12; 4:16,17,21; John 11:47,48; 12:19
- **as to what would come of this** Isa 9:7; 53:1,2; Da 2:34,35,44,45; Zech 6:12,13; Mark 4:30-32
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GOD'S WAYS PERPLEX HIS ENEMIES

[William MacDonald](#) quips "The bewildered officers had to report to the court that everything at the prison was in good order—

except that the prisoners were gone!" (BBC)

**Now when the captain ([strategos](#)) of the temple ([hieros](#)) guard and the chief priests ([archiereus](#)) heard these words** - When they heard the "key" (pun intended) words -- "locked," "guards standing", "no one inside" one can just imagine the perplexed look on their faces!

**Life Application Bible Commentary** – Professional guards do not lose twelve prisoners!

**They were greatly perplexed about them - Constable** quips "This whole scene calls to mind scenes from old [Keystone Cops movies](#)." The idea of [perplexity](#) includes uncertainty and doubt. They were completely [baffled](#)! It is sad that something so clearly supernatural caused them to be perplexed but not persuaded. Miracles may amaze but they do not pierce a hard heart. In this case what the miracle did do was give the apostles an opportunity to speak forth the living and active Word of God (Heb 4:12,13+, cf Ro 1:16+), which does pierce hard hearts (cf "cut to the quick" in Acts 5:33+).

[Robertson](#) quips "If they had only known how this grain of mustard seed would grow into the greatest tree on earth and how dwarfed the tree of Judaism would be beside it!"

**Greatly perplexed** (at a loss)([1280](#))([diaporeo](#) from **dia** = through + **aporeo**= to be at a loss as with the disciples in Jn 13:22) means to be thoroughly at a loss, totally perplexed, to be in much doubt, to hesitate greatly. Luke uses the [imperfect tense](#) (over and over, again and again) describing their confused mental state. They did not know what to make of all that was happening. God's supernatural ways have a way of perplexing natural men (Lk. 9:7 = Herod's perplexity at all the supernatural activity [cf Lk 9:2, 6]; Acts 2:12 = the crowd's "great perplexity" witnessing the sign and sounds of the coming of the Spirit) and even His own children (Peter in Acts 10:17).

**Vincent on diaporeo** - From **dia** = *through*, and **aporeo** = *to be without a way out*. The radical idea of the compound verb seems to be of one who goes *through* the whole list of possible ways, and finds no way out! (**ED**: In this case the pun is that 12 men had found a **way out**!) Hence, *to be in perplexity*. Diaporeō is used as a reaction by people to a manifestation of God's power.

**As to what would come of this** - It is as if they were saying "How far will this popular movement go?" The **NLT** paraphrase probably gives us a good sense of the meaning of this phrase rendering it that they were "*wondering where it would all end*." The **ESV** is similar = "wondering what this would come to." What would be their concern? Of course their major concern was about SELF, about their own reputations and how these events would impact them.

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**AN UNSTOPPABLE WITNESS!** Suppose someone threatened to kill you if you didn't stop talking about God. You probably would be tempted to keep quiet. But consider the response of the apostles: after being threatened by powerful leaders, arrested, jailed, and miraculously released, they went right back to preaching. This was nothing less than God's power working in and through them (Acts 4:13)! When we are utterly convinced of the truth of Christ's resurrection, and when we know intimately the presence and power of his Holy Spirit, let us speak out for Christ. (Life Application Bible Commentary – Acts)

**Acts 5:25 But someone came and reported to them, "The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!"**

KJV Acts 5:25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.

- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**"THEY'RE TEACHING  
AGAIN!"**

**But someone came and reported to them** - The previous perplexing report was followed by an even more disturbing disclosure!

**Reported** (announced) ([518](#))([apaggello](#)) means carrying back word from something that has happened. In this case they brought back a report of a supernatural happening to these men who refused to believe in the supernatural! Now tell me that our Great God does not have a sense of humor!

**The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!"** - He refers to them as "the men" not the apostles of Jesus. This group and their minions do all they can to avoid the Name of Jesus! I know people like that in my life and

cringe for I know there will be a day when there is no avoiding Him for whether they are great (like the high priests) or small, all who reject Him must appear before Him (Jn 5:22, Rev 20:11,12, 15+) and pay the debt of "the wages of sin" (Ro 6:23+).

**Standing** is in the perfect tense emphasizing the fact that they were still there. The apostles were not obeying the command of the Sadducees to cease teaching but were obeying the command of God (Acts 5:29) to "**go...stand and speak**" the "**whole message of this Life.**" (Acts 5:20). Recall the episode in Acts 4

And when they (Sanhedrin) had summoned them, they **commanded** them not to speak or teach at all in the Name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; 20 for **we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.**" (Acts 4:18-20+).

**Teaching** (1321)(**didasko**) in the present tense means the apostles were continually teaching in such a way that the will of the hearers might become conformed to the Gospel they taught.

**William MacDonald** - We must admire their (Spirit enabled) courage, and we must regain the capacity of the early church to suffer for our convictions at any cost. (BBC)

**People** is **laos** which gives us our words **lay people** (those not belonging to the clergy) and **laity**.

**Acts 5:26 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).**

KJV Acts 5:26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.

- **that they might be stoned** Acts 5:13; Mt 14:5; 21:26; 26:5; Luke 20:6,19; 22:2
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Then the captain went along with the officers and proceeded to bring them back without violence-** To bring them back - "slowly no doubt and solemnly" (ATR). The apostles willingly surrendered, trusting that God was in control. Jesus had told them these things would happen to them.

But beware of men, for they will hand you over to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues; 18 and you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. 19 "But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say. 20 "For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. (Matthew 10:17-20).

The principle is that the apostles held fast to Jesus' words and as a result His word held them fast. This principle is still true today. The caveat is that we must first hold fast to the Word - read it, study it, memorize it, meditate on it.

The apostles knew they were to imitate their Master (1 Peter 2:21) and undoubtedly recalled his non-retaliatory response to those who came to arrest Him in the Garden (Luke 22:52-53). They also knew that another appearance before the Sanhedrin was another opportunity to give a testimony about Jesus.

And so the temple "police" did not have to use force and clearly were relieved that they did not have to do so!

**Guzik** - Significantly, the apostles did not appeal to popular opinion for protection against the religious leaders. They could have incited the crowd by shouting, "Are you going to let them take us away?" But their trust was in God and God alone. A carnal solution to their problem was available, but they did not use it.

**For** - Term of explanation - explains why the temple police were glad the apostles gave them no resistance.

**They were afraid** (**phobeo** - imperfect = kept on fearing) **of the people, that they might be stoned** - This demonstrates the popularity of the apostles and the fact that these men like the Sanhedrin leaders had no fear of God, and yet did fear men! The proverb perfectly describes the scene - "**The fear of man (TEMPLE POLICE, SADDUCEES) brings a snare, but he (APOSTLES) who trusts in the LORD will be exalted.**" (Pr 29:25)

We see "religious" men fearing reaction of the people in Mt 21:26; Mk 11:32; 12:12; Lu 20:19; 22:2; Acts 4:21.

[Robertson](#) - They handled the apostles gently for fear of being stoned themselves by the people.

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## [You're Afraid Of Whom?](#)

Read: Numbers 13:30-14:10

The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe. —Proverbs 29:25

Mrs. Ima Terror chased her husband through the crowds at the zoo, waving her umbrella and unleashing insults like invisible missiles. Her perspiring and winded husband, seeing that the lock on the lion's cage had not quite closed, yanked it open, jumped into the cage, slammed the door, pushed the astonished lion hard against the bars, and peered over its shoulder. His frustrated wife shook her umbrella, stuttered in anger, and finally managed to explode, "Ralph, come out of there, you coward!"

Ralph, in this fictitious story, is like the people of Israel that we read about in the book of Numbers. They were confused about whom they should really fear. They saw themselves as grasshoppers when compared to the giants in the land where God wanted them to go (13:32-33).

If we are so afraid of people that we stop following the Lord, we're not trusting Him. It shows that we have doubted His plan, His power, and His promises. We have failed to recognize that He, above all others, is the One to be feared—which means that He is to be revered, trusted, loved, and obeyed.

Father, forgive us for fearing what we should not be afraid of, and for not fearing and trusting You.

Our love for God should always move  
Our hearts to do what's good and right;  
Love also fears His judgments true  
And stands in awe of His great might. —D. De Haan

Fear God, and you'll have nothing else to fear.

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## [Healthy Fear](#)

Read: Isaiah 51:7-16 | Bible in a Year: Leviticus 17-18; Matthew 27:27-50

The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe. —Proverbs 29:25

Fear of the disapproval of others can often affect the way we act. Some Native Americans recognized this and used scorn and ridicule to promote social order. For instance, when a child of the Fox tribe was taught the do's and don'ts of his culture, his elders didn't hold over his head an abstract rule of morality. Nor did they threaten him with punishment now or in the hereafter. Instead, they said to him, "The people of the village may say things about you."

In that culture the power of social restraint was used as a motivation for right conduct. But in speaking to the tribes of ancient Israel, the Lord warned His people that the "reproach of men," worrying about what people think, could be their downfall (Isa. 51:7-16). Their concern with what others said about them could cause them to make compromises. Instead, they were called on to trust the Lord and seek only His approval.

This is also good advice for us, for "the fear of man" is a snare to many Christians. How much better to find our fulfillment in doing what pleases God! Then the crippling fear of what others think can give way to the confidence of a healthy fear—a reverence for God that frees us to live for His approval.

Living for Jesus a life that is true,  
Striving to please Him in all that I do;  
Yielding allegiance, gladhearted and free,  
This is the pathway of blessing for me. —Chisholm

The fear of the Lord can deliver us from the fear of others.

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## [Fear Escape](#)

Read: Proverbs 1:1-7

You who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord; He is their help and their shield. —Psalm 115:11

In our increasingly dangerous world, think of what we have to fear: Ominous terrorist threats, frightening crime rates, increasing natural disasters, sobering energy crises, . . . God.

Yes, God. Ironic, isn't it, that in a world full of fearful things, the single source of our refuge and safety is also the One we are instructed to fear?

Consider Solomon's words: "In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, and His children will have a place of refuge" (Prov. 14:26). Then look at the next verse: "The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life."

We try to avoid life's fearful things because they interrupt our peace. Yet we are told to move toward fear—the fear of God. For those who "fear the Lord, . . . He is their help and their shield" (Ps. 115:11).

Our faith in God can deliver us from the fears of the world (Ps. 23:4)—but only because our faith relies on a fear that is different from worldly fear. Proverbs 29:25 says, "The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe."

To fear God is to sense His awesomeness. When we acknowledge that greatness and trust in Him, we no longer want to sin against Him. He becomes our refuge from the fears of this world. In Him we find peace.

Fear Him, ye saints, and you will then  
Have nothing else to fear;  
Make you His service your delight;  
Your wants shall be His care. —Tate & Brady

Those who fear God need not fear the world.

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## Acts 5:27 When they had brought them, they stood them before the Council. The high priest questioned them,

KJV Acts 5:27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them,

- **they stood them before the Council** Acts 4:7; 6:12; 22:30; 23:1; Luke 22:66
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## STANDING BEFORE THE SUPREME COURT

Jesus had given His men a prophetic warning that this would take place...

**Be on your guard** ([blepo](#) in the present imperative); for they will deliver ([paradidomi](#) same verb used of their Lord - Mt 26:45 = "betrayed") you to the courts ([sunedrion](#) - the Jewish "Supreme Court" - the Sanhedrin), and you will be flogged (Acts 5:40±) in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony ([marturion](#) = witness) to them (Acts 5:30-32). (Mk 13:9)

**When they had brought them they stood them before the Council** ([sunedrion](#)) - Recall that the Council is the highest legal, legislative, and judicial body among the Jews. Here we again have the verb **stood** ([histemi](#)), used multiple times in this section (Acts 5:20, 23, 25, 27). Because the apostles obeyed God to **stand** (Acts 5:20) and took their **stand** (Acts 5:25) in the Temple grounds, they were now brought to **stand** before the Sanhedrin.

This is the second of four times Jesus' followers were brought before the Sanhedrin - Peter and John = Acts 4:15, Peter and the apostles = Acts 5:27; Stephen = Acts 6:12; and Paul = Acts 22:30.

Recall that the seating arrangement of the Sanhedrin was in the form of a semi-circle and the members were on elevated chairs, the who atmosphere designed to intimidate anyone who had to appear before them. Yes, men in their natural state would be fearful, but apostles filled with the Spirit of boldness would not be fearful.

The high priest ([archiereus](#)) questioned them - Was this Annas or Caiaphas? We cannot know for sure. **Questioned** is the verb [eperotao](#) which was a legal technical term meaning to interrogate or examine. It is fascinating that the Sanhedrin do not interrogate them about their great escape (we can be certain they did not because of the nature of the apostle's answer in Acts 5:28). Now why didn't the Sanhedrin ask them about their jail break? My conjecture is that they really did not want to know! They knew that the jail had been securely locked and was well guarded. The only explanation for their escape would have been a miracle, a discussion the Sadducees assiduously sought to avoid! To give any credence to the supernatural would disrupt their doctrinal foundation and their entire belief system might crumble. We probably all know similar individuals who begin to fidget when we start to speak of the supernatural. Watch most people's reaction when you ask them where they would go forever if they died tonight (that's a question I like to ask folks whenever the opportunity presents itself as it provides a good [segue](#) to speak about our supernatural Gospel and supernatural God, Christ Jesus!)

**Acts 5:28 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."**

KJV Acts 5:28 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.

NET Acts 5:28 saying, "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name. Look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood on us!"

- **We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this nam** Acts 5:40; 4:18-21
- **intend to bring** Acts 2:23-36; 3:15; 4:10,11; 7:52; 1 Kings 18:17,18; 21:20; 22:8; Jer 38:4; Amos 7:10
- **this man's blood upon us** Jer 26:15; Mt 21:44; 23:35,36; 27:25; 1 Th 2:15,16
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL IT FILLED JERUSALEM!

**Saying, "We gave you strict orders** - More literally this is rendered as "We commanded ([paraggello](#)) you with a commandment ([paraggelia](#))." This doubling of similar words ("paraggelia pareggeilamen") is a Semitic idiom which is used for emphasis (cf Lk 22:15 Jesus words "earnestly desired" is literally "desire to desire.").

[Robertson](#) - The command referred to occurs in Acts 4:17 and Acts 4:18 and the refusal of Peter and John in Acts 4:20.

**Gave** (orders) ([3853](#))([paraggello](#)) means to hand on or pass on an announcement from one to another who is at one's side, such as to what must be done, usually with the idea of a command or charge.

**Strict orders** ([3852](#)) ([paraggelia](#) from **para** = beside, alongside + **aggello** = announce, tell, declare) literally describes the handing on of an announcement from one person to the side of another or the passing along of a message from one to another such as to what must be done. **Paraggelia** represents a directive from an authoritative source and was used of commands received from a superior and transmitted to others.

**Not to continue teaching in this Name** - Twice he says "**this Name...this Man's blood**") They will not mention His Name, Jesus, regarding which Peter had clearly declared "**there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.**" (Acts 4:12+). They know that the Name Jesus means "Jehovah Saves" and they would simply have no part in acknowledging salvation in His Name as even a possibility. Recall also that the Sanhedrin are composed primarily of Sadducees who did not believe in life after death, so why would one need salvation! They know today!

**Teaching** (present tense = continually) ([1321](#))([didasko](#) from **dáo**= know or teach; English = didactic; see study of related noun [didaskalia](#) and the adjective [didaktikos](#)) means to provide instruction or information in a formal or informal setting.

**And yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching** - **Your teaching** is really God's teaching, the good news of the Gospel of salvation. They simply did not have eyes to see it or ears to hear it and be saved.

And as [William MacDonald](#) says "This was an unintentional compliment to the effectiveness of the apostles' ministry!"

G Campbell Morgan adds "This was...the most remarkable testimony to the growth of Christianity in Jerusalem at that time."

**Filled** ([4137](#))([pleroo](#)) in this context has its literal meaning to fill something full, like a net with fish (Mt 13:48), like the fragrance of

perfume in a room (Jn 12:3) and here of the Holy Spirit filled with God's holy Word, permeating so to speak the entire city.

**Teaching** (instruction) (1322)(**didache** from **didasko** = to give instruction) describes the activity of teaching (instruction). The idea of **didache** was to impart knowledge (In this case the Gospel) about which the people were ignorant or ill informed. Ultimately the purpose of the teaching was to shape the will of those who heard the teaching.

**Wiersbe** astutely observes that "even this hateful indictment was an admission that the church was increasing and getting the job done! The wrath of man was bringing praise to the Lord (Ps. 76:10 = " For the wrath of man shall praise You; With a remnant of wrath You will gird Yourself.") ([Wiersbe Commentary on Acts](#))

Notice the high priest brings two charges - failure to stop teaching in "this Name," and intent to bring "this man's blood" upon the Sanhedrin.

**John Phillips** on **bring this man's blood upon us** - That was a guilty conscience speaking. They had already brought that blood upon themselves when they had incited the mob to shout, "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matt. 27:25). The apostles, however, had no desire to bring the blood of Christ to the door of these men. Their desire was to bring that blood to their hearts, that they might be saved from their sin. (Exploring Acts)

**And intend to bring this man's blood upon us** - This was already a **fait accompli** by the leaders themselves! And yet they accuse the apostles of having in mind as a purpose to make them guilty of the blood of Jesus. They were deceived and deluded, for in fact the teaching was to release one from their guilt of sins against God by belief in the atoning blood of Jesus. In essence, the spiritually blind religious leaders had it "backwards."

**Intend** (1014)(**boulomai**) refers to a settled desire, one born of or springing from **reason** and not from **emotion**. To will, to wish, to will deliberately, to intend, to have a purpose, to be minded.

**To bring** (1863)(**epago** from **epi** = upon + **ago** = bring) is literally to bring upon, to lead up to, to introduce (as to a place - Lxx of Ezek 14:15). Used only in Acts 5:28, 2 Pe 2:1 ("**bringing** swift destruction **upon** themselves") and 2 Pe 2:5 ("**brought** a flood **upon** the world").

**Gilbrant** on uses in the Septuagint - Often epagō is used figuratively to bring something upon someone, usually something evil. This use is found not only in classical Greek but in the Septuagint and the New Testament. God promised to bring evil on apostate Israel and Judah (Jer 6:19; 11:11). Moses announced that God would bring the plague of death on the firstborn of the Egyptians (Exodus 11:1). Epagō also is employed in the Septuagint to express the idea of bringing sin(s) upon someone (Ge 20:9; Ex 32:21,34; 34:7). But in a few instances this verb is used positively (cf. Jeremiah 32:42). (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary – Delta-Epsilon)

**Epago** - over 150x in the Septuagint -

Ge 6:17 = " I **am bringing** the flood of water **upon** the earth"; Ge 7:4; Ge 8:1; Ge 18:19; Ge 20:9; Ge 26:10; Ge 27:12; Ex. 10:4 = "I **will bring** locusts into your territory."; Ex 10:13; Exod. 11:1 = ""One more plague I **will bring on** Pharaoh and on Egypt"; Exod. 15:19; Exod. 15:26; Exod. 28:43; Ex. 32:21; Exod. 32:34; Exod. 33:5; Exod. 34:7; Lev. 22:16; Lev. 26:25 = "I will also **bring upon** you a sword which will execute vengeance for the covenant"; Lev. 26:36; Deut. 23:13; Deut. 28:49; Deut. 28:61; Deut. 29:27; Jos. 23:15; Jos. 24:7; Jdg. 4:7; Jdg. 9:24; 1 Sam. 5:6; 1 Sam. 15:23; 2 Sam. 17:14; 1 Ki. 8:46; 1 Ki. 9:9; 1 Ki. 21:21; 1 Ki. 21:29; 2 Ki. 22:16; 2 Ki. 22:20; 1 Chr. 4:10; 2 Chr. 7:22; 2 Chr. 34:24; 2 Chr. 34:28; Est. 9:25; Job 10:17; Job 22:17; Job 34:28; Job 38:5; Job 42:11; Ps. 7:11; Ps. 78:26; Ps. 88:7; Prov. 6:22; Prov. 26:11; Isa. 1:25; Isa. 7:17; Isa. 10:12; Isa. 10:24; Isa. 15:7; Isa. 15:9; Isa. 24:21; Isa. 26:14; Isa. 26:21; Isa. 27:1; Isa. 31:3; Isa. 42:25; Isa. 48:9; Isa. 63:7; Jer. 4:6; Jer. 5:15; Jer. 6:19; Jer. 11:11; Jer. 11:23; Jer. 15:8; Jer. 17:18; Jer. 18:22; Jer. 19:3; Jer. 19:15; Jer. 22:7; Jer. 23:12; Jer. 25:13; Jer. 32:42; Jer. 36:31; Jer. 42:17; Jer. 44:2; Jer. 45:5; Jer. 48:44; Jer. 49:36; Jer. 49:37; Jer. 51:64; Lam. 1:21; Ezek. 5:1; Ezek. 5:17; Ezek. 6:3; Ezek. 11:8; Ezek. 13:13; Ezek. 14:15; Ezek. 14:17; Ezek. 14:22; Ezek. 23:22; Ezek. 26:7; Ezek. 28:7; Ezek. 29:8; Ezek. 30:24; Ezek. 33:2; Ezek. 39:21; Dan. 4:26; Dan. 9:12; Dan. 9:14; Dan. 11:32; Hos. 13:15; Amos 1:8; Amos 5:9; Zeph. 3:17; Hag. 1:11; Zech. 13:7;

**This man's blood upon us** - Note their derogatory description of Jesus as "**this man's**," so **loathe** are they to even have His Name on their lips. I was watching a great Jewish entertainer on television recently and she did mention the Name above all names, except she used it as a curse word! Woe! Tragedy of tragedies! He Who would be her Messiah, instead was her curse word!

Deceit is a horrible condition for when one is deceived they do not even know it. The Sanhedrin were deceived and refused to accept responsibility for their strategic role in the Crucifixion of Jesus.

[Robertson](#) on **this man's** - Contemptuous slur and refusal to call the name of Jesus as in the Talmud later.

**Vincent** adds that "The phrase (**this man's**) is remarkable as furnishing the first instance of that avoidance of the name of Christ which makes the Talmud, in the very same terms, refer to him most frequently as Peloni, "so and so."

The **blood** of Jesus was already upon them for "all the people said (TO PILATE) "His**blood** shall be on us and on our children!" (Mt 27:25, cf Mt 27:22,23). The Sanhedrin (most of whom were involved in the illegal trial of Jesus) conveniently forgot (DENIED OR RATIONALIZED) their former vow, only 50+ days earlier! Now they rebuke the apostles for holding them accountable for Christ's blood! Talk about [duplicity](#)!

**Hughes** adds that "Such fear and denial are trademarks of modern enemies of Christ as well."

**Acts 5:29 But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men.**

KJV Acts 5:29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

- **We must obey God rather than men** Acts 4:19; Ge 3:17; 1 Samuel 15:24; Mark 7:7-9; Rev 14:8-12
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## A GREAT TRUTH TO LIVE BY

Indeed, this is not only a great truth to live but to die by! This short statement by Peter is one of the greatest statements in all of Scripture. Obedience is always the way to blessing, even if it is associated with a time of affliction (as it was here, their obedience bringing a flogging).

**But Peter and the apostles answered** - The verb answered is *apokrinomai* which means to reply as one might do as somewhat of a formal response. In fact Peter's reply would lead to another opportunity to proclaim the Gospel.

They are essentially repeating the truth that was stated in Acts 4

But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:19-20+)

**We must obey God rather than men** - Peter and the 11 in essence reply that their response (continuing to teach in the Temple) was not optional for them but that they were under compulsion to do this because God (He is implied) had commanded them to "**Go, stand and speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this Life**" (Acts 5:20) They were obligated to preach the Gospel, no matter the cost! And eventually tradition says it cost most of them their natural lives (but see Jesus' encouraging words in Lk 12:4+ "do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do." cf Mt 10:28)

God's commands take priority, but they should be His commands, NOT our extensions of those commands. And if obedience to God brings about disobedience to authority, then one must be prepared to suffer the consequences as did the apostles. (Acts 5:40 cf Mt 5:10, 11, 12)

**John Phillips** - There was a higher court in Israel than the Sanhedrin: the Supreme Court of Heaven. The God of heaven had sent His Son into the world; He had sent His Spirit into the world; He had now sent His servants into the world. The Sanhedrin had no authority to forbid them to preach in the name of Jesus. They knew it. The apostles knew it. It was simply a question of loyalty. (Exploring Acts)

**Toussaint** - Christians are to obey their governments unless it is a sin to do so (cf. Ro 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17). (BKC)

**Moody Bible Commentary** - The apostles' determination to obey God rather than man placed the Sanhedrin in a predicament. Because the Sanhedrin claimed they were committed to obeying God (see 5:29 and 5:32b), they did not want to be perceived as opposing the Lord.

**Barclay** - They had principles. And their ruling principle was that in all circumstances obedience to God must come first. They never asked: 'Is this course of action safe?' They asked: 'Is this what God wants me to do?' (Acts of the Apostles)

[Robertson](#) on **we must** - Moral necessity left them no choice. They stood precisely where Peter and John were when before the



Sanhedrin before (Acts 4:20).

**Must** (1163)(**dei**) describes that which is necessary. **Must** is in the **present tense** so what they are telling the Sanhedrin is that they are continually under compulsion to obey God's commands. They were obligated. **Dei** is the same word Peter had used in his first appearance before the Sanhedrin when he declared "there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we **must** (**dei**) be saved." (Acts 4:12+). The Lord Jesus had used this same word in giving His first command to Saul declaring "**get up** (aorist imperative) and **enter** (aorist imperative) the city, and it will be told you what you **must** (**dei** in the present tense = what you continually must) do." (Acts 9:6+, cf "must" in Acts 9:16+) Later in Acts Luke records that the apostles were "strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we **must** (**dei** in the present tense) enter the kingdom of God." (Acts 14:22+). The Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas "Sirs, what must (**dei** in the present tense) I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30+).

Peter's declaration echoes the incredible testimony of the three Jewish boys standing before King Nebuchadnezzar facing their death sentence for disobeying his orders.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. 17 "If it be so, **our God Whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire**; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. 18 "But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that **we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.**" (Daniel 3:16-18+)

**Comment** - The very flames that were meant to destroy them actually delivered them from their bonds! (see Da 3:23-25). Martin Luther echoed the words of the three Hebrew boys when he declared "Here I stand. God help me. I cannot do otherwise."

Daniel likewise chose to obey God rather than men (King Darius' decree prohibiting prayer - Da 6:7) regardless of the consequences.

Now when Daniel knew that the document (prohibiting prayer for 30 days) was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously. (Da 6:10+)

It is notable that Peter is also the one who gave believers in Jesus this command...

**Submit** (aorist imperative) yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, (1 Peter 2:13)

**Comment** - We submit to the right of government to limit our right to choose in hundreds of areas, especially when the good of others is at stake. We understand that governments exist to limit the right to choose and we submit to that. And we do it "for the Lord's sake" for His glory and honor, always seeking to avoid sully His great Name!

**Charles Ryrie** gives the one exception to Peter's command to saints - Christians are to be law-abiding citizens. If the law of one's government violates the revealed will of God, then, of course, the believer must obey God, though he may have to suffer the penalties of that government's laws.

**John Piper** - The most important thing this text does is put all of our social and political life into relation to God. The Bible is not a book about how to get along in the world. It is a book inspired by God about how to live to God. I love that phrase "live to God." It's not mine. It's Paul's. He said in Galatians 2:19, "Through the law I died to the law that I might live to God." The aim of life—including our social and political life—is to live to God. To live with God in view. To live under his authority. To live on him like we live on air and food and water. To live for his good reputation. ([Slaves to God](#))

**Obey** (3980) See [peitharcho](#) in Acts 5:32. Literally this verb means to obey a ruler.

**Kent Hughes** applies this section to our lives asking first "How was this remarkable liberation and power gained? Obedience. Peter and the apostles began their answer by saying, "We must obey God rather than men!" (Acts 5:29) and concluded by saying, "We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him" (Acts 5:32). The witnessing power of the Holy Spirit is released through obedience to Christ, to the Word, to the inner voice of his guidance. Some good self-check questions are: (1) Am I living consistently in view of what I know about Christ? (2) Am I living a life that is in accord with what I am learning in the Scriptures? (3) Am I refusing to do what I know he wants? (4) Am I refusing to share my faith because of fear of rejection or appearing unintellectual or uncultured or any other reason? We cannot have the power of the Holy Spirit if we are saying "**NO**" to Him. (**ED**: cf 1 Th 5:19+, Eph 4:30+). (See [Acts: The Church Afire](#)) (Or listen to his sermon [The Liberty of God's](#)

## Legal Versus Right

Read: Acts 5:17-29

Peter and the other apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men.” —Acts 5:29

In his powerful book *Unspeakable*, Os Guinness wrestles with the problem of evil in the world. In one section, he focuses on the Nuremberg trials that followed World War II. The Nazis stood charged with crimes against humanity, and their mantra of defense was simple: “I was merely following orders.” The verdict, however, was that the soldiers had a moral obligation to defy orders that, though legal, were clearly wrong.

In a much different context, Peter and the disciples were arrested for presenting the message of the risen Christ and brought before the religious rulers in Jerusalem. Rather than allowing themselves to be shaped by the mood of the mob, the disciples declared their intention to continue preaching Christ.

The orders of the religious establishment may have been legal, but they were wrong. When the disciples chose to obey God rather than the godless religious leaders, they raised a standard of conviction that rose above the opinions of the rulers of this world.

The trials we face may test our commitment. But we will find opportunities to exalt the King if we trust Him for the strength to go beyond the words of the crowd-pleasers and do right as He defines it in His Word.

Say not, “The days are evil. Who’s to blame?”  
And fold the hand and acquiesce—oh, shame!  
Stand up, speak out, and bravely, in God’s name,  
Be strong! —Babcock

We must choose daily the way of the cross over the way of the crowd. —Warren

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## Two Kingdoms

Read: Matthew 22:15-22

Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s. —Matthew 22:21

In a report in *USA Today*, Rick Hampson wrote: “The young generally don’t have the old-time political religion. They look at voting and see a quaint, irrational act.” One graduate was quoted as saying, “I don’t care enough to care about why I don’t care.” I wonder if this is how we as Jesus-followers sometimes view our civic responsibility!

The insights of Jesus in Matthew 22 helped His followers think clearly about their civic duty in the world. The Jews were required to pay taxes to the Roman government. They hated this taxation because the money went directly into Caesar’s treasury, where some of it supported the pagan temples and decadent lifestyle of the Roman aristocracy. They may have questioned whether they even had a civic responsibility to Caesar. Jesus reminded them, however, that they had dual citizenship. They lived in a world with two kingdoms—Caesar’s kingdom (human authority) and God’s kingdom (spiritual authority). They had responsibilities to both, but their greater responsibility was to God and His kingdom (Acts 5:28-29).

As followers of Christ, we are commanded to cooperate with our rulers, but we are called to give God our ultimate obedience and commitment.

We live today as citizens of two worlds,  
And this demands a duty to fulfill;  
But greater far should be our heart’s desire  
To honor Christ and always do His will. —Hess

Government has authority, but God has ultimate authority.

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Read: Matthew 26:69-75

Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men.. —Acts 5:29

Twenty-six people died because they would not step on a picture of Jesus. In the 17th century some Christians were faithfully serving Jesus on an island in Japan. According to missionary Tim Johnson, a provincial leader, called a shogun, decided that these believers were a threat to the traditional culture, so he devised a fiendish trap. He placed a picture of Jesus on the street and demanded that the Christians in his province step on the picture in renunciation of their faith. When the test was finished, 26 people had refused. They were crucified at the water's edge for all to see.

It's sobering to realize that the apostle Peter, when questioned about his loyalty, denied that he was a disciple of Jesus (Mt. 26:69-75). But it was that same Peter who deeply regretted his choice and gave the rest of his life in bold witness for Christ.

Every day we are confronted with situations or decisions that tempt us to betray the Lord by choosing the world, the flesh, or the devil instead of obeying Him. We need His help to keep from denying Him by acts of sin or disobedience.

May the resolve of our heart be that we will never betray our Lord. Instead, may we be determined to boldly and unashamedly tell others of our love for Him.

Jesus is all the world to me,  
And true to Him I'll be;  
O how could I this Friend deny,  
When He's so true to me?  
—Thompson

To keep from denying Christ, you must rely on Christ.

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### **Whom Do You Fear?**

Read: Acts 4:1-22

We ought to obey God rather than men. —Acts 5:29

A soldier was standing at attention during a parade drill when he waved to one of the spectators. The drill instructor went over to the young man and growled, "Soldier, don't ever do that again!" But as his company marched past the reviewing stand the young man waved a second time. When the troops got back to the barracks, the drill instructor barreled in and barked at the soldier, "I told you not to wave! Aren't you afraid of me?" "Yes sir," the private replied, "but you don't know my mother!"

Peter and John had upset the religious elite in Jerusalem. The city's power brokers were disturbed by the message the two men preached and the miracles they performed. They had to be stopped. Peter and John were arrested and thrown into jail. They had every reason to be afraid. Yet, the next day they stood up to their accusers with great courage. "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge," they boldly said (Acts 4:19). They feared God more than they feared their persecutors.

If we are tempted to be quiet when we should speak up for Christ, we must remember that we can speak and act with conviction because we know our God. His authority outranks all others. He is the One we need to please.

Will you be bold in your witness  
By giving lost sinners God's Word?  
Jesus will honor your service,  
And sinners will surely be stirred.  
—Bosch

When you fear God, you have nothing else to fear.

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**Motive Check-Up** Based on the Truth of Acts 5:29 (cf Matthew 10:28)

- Am I more concerned about what God thinks about my life than about what others think? Yes  No
  - Would I pray, read my Bible, give and serve as much if nobody but God ever noticed? Yes  No
  - Am I more concerned about pleasing God than I am about being accepted and appreciated by men? Yes  No
- 

## Obedience to God

### I. ITS NECESSITY.

1. Commanded (Deuteronomy 13:4; Deuteronomy 10:12).
2. The condition of acceptance with God (Exodus 19:5; Jeremiah 7:23).
3. The condition of securing God's help (Exodus 23: 22; Deuteronomy 7:9).
4. Expected of God's people (Deuteronomy 27:9, 10).
5. More than burnt-offerings (1 Samuel 15:22).
6. A fit return for God's mercies (1 Samuel 15:24).
7. Must obey God rather than man (Acts 4:19, 20; Acts 5:29).
8. Exhorted (Jeremiah 26:13; Jeremiah 38:20).
9. A proof of friendship to Christ (John 15:14).

### II. WHAT IT INCLUDES.

1. Obeying God's voice (Exodus 19:5; Jeremiah 7:23).
2. Obeying God's law (Joshua 1:7; Isaiah 42:24).
3. Bringing every thought into obedience to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5).
4. Obeying the gospel (Romans 1:5; Romans 6:17; Romans 10:16).
5. Keeping God's commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

### III. HOW TO BE RENDERED. Should be —

1. From the heart (Deuteronomy 11:13; Romans 6:1).
2. Willingly (Psalm 18:44; Isaiah 1:19).
3. Faithfully (Joshua 22:2, 3).
4. Undeviating (Deuteronomy 28:14).
5. Constantly (Philippians 2:12).

### IV. MOTIVES TO.

1. Promises to (Exodus 23:22; 1 Samuel 12:14, 15; Isaiah 1:19).
2. Blessedness of (Deuteronomy 11:27; Deuteronomy 28:1-14; Luke 11:28; James 1:5).
3. Disobedience punished (Deuteronomy 11:28; Deuteronomy 28:15-68; Joshua 5:6; Isaiah 1:20). (S. S. Times.)

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One Saturday there was a little boy named Jamie Brown pushing along the road on his way home. He had only travelled about a mile, when, at a turn of the road, three or four very wicked boys, who disliked him for going to church, and refusing to join them in mischief, came rushing out from a clump of trees with a fierce bull-dog, and said, "Brown, you must say the bad words we tell you before you go another step, or we'll send the dog at you." And then they began to swear, and speak the worst of words. Now there was one thing Jamie had learned at his mother's fireside, and that was, that it was wrong to take God's name in vain, and wrong to foul the tongue with bad words. But he simply said, "Let me go; I want to get home." "Not one step farther," said the biggest fellow, "until you say these words after me. Swear this oath, and we'll let you go," and he repeated wild and wicked words. "I dare not say that," replied the boy; "and you have no right to ask me." "Swear the oath this moment, or we will let slip the dog." "I will not swear that oath; and you have no right to let slip the dog on me." They gave him one more chance, and then let loose the dog. That night, as his mother and the other children sat round the fire, the brave boy told the rest of the adventure. It came into his head, as his savage persecutors were unloosing the dog, that God, who shut the mouths of the lions in the den where Daniel was, could shut the mouth of the fierce dog on that lonely road. And God did shut the mouth of the dog. The big, hulking scoundrels, more brutal than their dog, yelled it at the harmless boy. The dog barked furiously for a second or two, and went rushing up to him. But it neither bit nor offered to bite. And Jamie was delivered out of their hands. (N. T. Anecdotes.)

KJV Acts 5:30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

- **The God of our fathers** Acts 3:13-15; 22:14; 1 Chr 12:17; 29:18; Ezra 7:27; Luke 1:55,72
- **raised up Jesus** Acts 3:26; 13:33
- **Whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross** Acts 2:22-24,32; 4:10,11; 10:39; 13:28; Gal 3:13; 1 Peter 2:24
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PETER ACCUSES THE SANHEDRIN OF PUTTING JESUS ON THE CROSS

**The God of our fathers** - Peter is addressing Jews so his introductory statement conveys to them the fact that he is speaking about the God of the Old Testament. In Acts 3:13 Peter gave a similar introduction declaring "**The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers.**"

**Raised up Jesus** - The Sadducees did not believe in the doctrine of the resurrection so this first point must have infuriated them (cf Acts 4:2+)! Peter is saying that the God Who the Sadducees knew (for they held to the teachings of the Pentateuch - e.g., see Ex 3:6) was the same God Who raised Jesus from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus was the Father's "**Amen!**" to His Son's "**It is finished!**"

**Bob Utley** - The NT affirms that the Father raised Jesus (cf. Acts 2:24, 32; 3:15, 26; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 33, 34, 37; 27:31; Ro 6:4, 9) to confirm the truth of Jesus' life and teachings. This is a major aspect of the [kerugma](#) (cf. 1 Cor. 15:1-8ff).

**Raised up** (1453) ([egeiro](#)) means to rouse a sleeping person. Peter used this verb to describe raising the lame man (Acts 3:7). Of course in this context it means to raise the dead body of Jesus to life. Peter has already used [egeiro](#) twice in similar contexts...

"But you (MEN OF ISRAEL GATHERING AROUND THEM IN THE PORTICO OF SOLOMON) disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, but put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God **raised** from the dead, a fact to which we are (present tense = continually) **witnesses** ([martus/martys](#) used in Acts 5:31). (Acts 3:14-15+)

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people, 9 if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, 10 let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God **raised** from the dead—by this name this man stands here before you in good health. (Acts 4:8-10+)

**Whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross** (literally "a tree" - [xulon](#)) - The NAS marginal note has "on Whom you had laid violent hands." (cf 1 Peter 2:24+) "Hang on a tree" is by the time of the first century an idiom for crucifixion" (NET)

**Longenecker** on cross (tree) - "While [xylon](#) [tree] was used in antiquity and in the Lxx variously for 'a tree,' 'wood' of any kind, 'a pole,' and various objects made of wood, including 'a gallows,' it is also used in the NT for the cross of Jesus." (Expositor's Bible Commentary)

**John Phillips** - Some Jews refer to Jesus still as [Taluy](#) ("the hanged one").

**NET Note** - Or "by crucifying him" ("**hang on a tree**") is by the time of the first century an idiom for [crucifixion](#). The allusion is to the judgment against Jesus as a rebellious figure, appealing to the language of Dt 21:23. The Jewish leadership has badly "misjudged" Jesus.

**Had put to death** (1315) ([diacheirizo](#) from [dia](#) = intensifies meaning + [cheirizo](#) = to handle from word [cheir](#) = hand) means literally to lay hands upon and then to kill or to slay (with one's own hands). This is at least the second time the leaders of the Sanhedrin have heard this accusation from the Spirit filled lips of Peter! (Acts 4:10+).

**Hanging** (2910) ([kremannumi](#)) means literally to hang something or someone on something (in Acts 5:30 implying the Cross as stated in Acts 10:39, also Lk 23:39+). In Mt 18:6 Jesus describes a "heavy millstone...hung around his neck," referring to anyone who cause one of the little ones who believe in Him to stumble. Used to describe the poisonous viper "hanging from" Paul's hand (Acts 28:4).

**Paul** used this verb in his famous explanation in Galatians 3:13+

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO **HANGS ON A TREE**” (Dt 21:22, 23).

**Kremannumi** - 7x in 7v - depend(1), hanged(1), hanging(3), hangs(1), hung(1). - Mt 18:6 Mt 22:40 Luke 23:39 Acts 5:30 Acts 10:39 Acts 28:4 Gal 3:13

**Acts 5:31 "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.**

KJV Acts 5:31 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.

- **He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand** Acts 2:33,36; 4:11; Ps 89:19,24; 110:1,2; Ezek 17:24; Mt 28:18; Eph 1:20-23; Php 2:9-11; Heb 2:10; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22
- **a Prince** Acts 3:15; Ps 2:6-12; Isa 9:6; Ezek 34:24; 37:25; Da 9:25; 10:21; Rev 1:5
- **a Saviour** Acts 13:23; Isa 43:3,11; 45:21; 49:26; Mt 1:21; Luke 2:11; Php 3:20; Titus 1:4; Titus 2:10,13; 3:4-6; 2 Peter 1:1,11; 2:20; 3:18; 1 John 4:14; Jude 1:25
- **To grant repentance to Israel** Acts 3:26; 11:18; Jer 31:31-33; Ezek 36:25-38; Zech 12:10; Luke 24:47; Ro 11:26,27; 2 Timothy 2:25,26
- **and forgiveness of sins.** Acts 3:19; 13:38,39; Mark 2:10; 4:12; John 20:21-23; 2 Cor 2:10; Eph 1:7; Colossians 1:14
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## **JESUS A PRINCE AND A SAVIOR**

**He** (THE VERY ONE THEY CRUCIFIED) **is the One Whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior**- This is a repetition of the previous accusation that they "put to death the Prince of life, the One Whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses." (Acts 3:15+). These words must have been very painful for the Sanhedrin to hear, for they are a fulfillment of Jesus' prophetic answer to this same body some 50 plus days earlier...

"If You are the Christ (THE MESSIAH), tell us (THE SANHEDRIN)." But He said to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe; 68 and if I ask a question, you will not answer. 69 "But from now on **THE SON OF MAN WILL BE SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND of the power OF GOD.**" 70 And they all said, "Are You the Son of God, then?" And He said to them, "Yes, I am." 71 Then they said, "What further need do we have of testimony? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth." (Lk 22:67-71+)

**His right hand** - This truth of Jesus' exaltation to the place of honor, power, and authority is repeated throughout Scripture - Psalm 110:1, Mt 22:44; Mk 14:62; 16:19; Acts 2:33-34; 5:31, Acts 7:55; Ro 8:34; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; and 1 Pe 3:22

**Prince** ("Prince of life" in Acts 3:15)([747](#))([archegos](#)) strictly speaking is the One Who goes first on the path and hence is the source, the leader, the pioneer Who blazes the trail, in this case the "trail" of salvation leading to eternal life. Hebrews 2:10NRSV+ refers to Jesus as "the **Pioneer**" (archegos) Who through suffering was made perfect (cf Archegos in Heb 12:2+ = "**Author** and Perfecter of faith.") Jesus was the "Founder" (and Firm Foundation) of the movement (Christianity).

**Wiersbe** - As the "Pioneer of life," Jesus saves us and leads us into exciting experiences as we walk "in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). There are always new trails to blaze. Hebrews 2:10 calls Him "the Pioneer [captain] of their salvation," for our salvation experience must never become static. The Christian life is not a parking lot; it is a launching pad! It is not enough just to be born again; we must also grow spiritually (2 Peter 3:18) and make progress in our walk. In Hebrews 12:2, Jesus is called "the Pioneer [author]... of our faith," which suggests that He leads us into new experiences that test our faith and help it to grow. One of the major themes of Hebrews is "let us press on to maturity" (Heb. 6:1), and we cannot mature unless we follow Christ, the Pioneer, into new areas of faith and ministry. ([Wiersbe Commentary on Acts](#))

**Spurgeon** - A **Prince** tells of — (1) Honor as the reward of His sufferings on earth. While He was here He was treated as a felon. What presents the Prince of Wales brought home from his travels! But the Prince of Glory took home with Him His wounds only. But the shame and the rejection are now ended, and in glory Jesus is manifestly a Prince, revered, obeyed, and honored.(2) Power. His is no nominal principedom — He has both glory and strength. Unto Him is given the mediatorial kingdom, which includes all power

in heaven and in earth, so that He is well styled "the blessed and only Potentate." There is no bound to this power:(3) Dominion. If Christ is to be yours you must let Him rule over you. "He must reign." He claims to be Master and Lord to those who ask salvation at His hands; and is not the claim a just one? Whom should we serve but the Lord who became a servant for our sakes? It must be so, or salvation is impossible. You must accept Jesus to be a leader and a commander to you, or you cannot win the battle of life. You must yield Him loving obedience, or He will not be married to your souls. His dominion is sweetly tempered by love; so that, as the prophet writes, "Thou shalt call Me no more Baali," that is, "My Lord," with a hardness of rulership, but Ishi, "My Lord," because Thou art my Husband. ([Reference](#))

**Savior** (4990)(**soter** from **sozo** = rescue from peril > from **saos** = safe; delivered) refers to the agent of salvation or deliverance, the one who rescues, delivers, saves and preserves. Anyone who saves or delivers can be called a deliverer or rescuer (a **soter**). **Thayer** writes that the name **soter** "was given by the ancients to deities, especially tutelary deities, to princes, kings, and in general to men who had conferred signal benefits upon their country, and in the more degenerate days by way of flattery to personages of influence." Roman emperors were often referred to as "**soter**" for inscriptions have been found in the eastern part of the Empire which called Pompey "**Soter** and Founder," Caesar "**Soter** of the World," and Augustus "**Soter** of Humankind" and Hadrian "**Soter** of the Kosmos!" Only Jesus is "Soter of the Kosmos (World)," the Source of salvation, the Deliverer, Preserver, Protector, Healer, and the One Who rescues man from mortal danger and eternal peril and unto a state of spiritual prosperity and eternal bliss. Luke has three uses of **Soter** all referring to Jesus = Lk. 1:47; Lk. 2:11; Acts 5:31; Acts 13:23.

**Bob Utley** adds that **Savior** (Soter) "was used in the first century Greco-Roman world of Caesar. He claimed to be the savior of culture and peace. Another term which the Caesars claimed for themselves, but Christians used uniquely for Jesus, was Lord ([kurios](#)). Another aspect of the term "**Savior**" is that it was an OT term for YHWH (cf. 2 Sa 22:3; Ps. 106:21; Isa. 43:4, 11; 45:15, 21; 49:26; 60:16; 63:8). NT writers often assert the deity of Jesus by attributing to Him OT titles of YHWH. Notice how Paul in his letter to Titus does this - Titus 1:3, "God our Savior", Titus 1:4, "Christ Jesus our Savior", Titus 2:10, "God our Savior", Titus 2:13, "our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus", Titus 3:4, "God our Savior", Titus 3:6, "Jesus Christ our Savior."

**Exalted** (lifted up) ([5312](#))(**hupsoo**) from **hupsos** = height, elevation) means to lift up spatially, to raise high. This is a "dual use" verb for in one context it refers to lifted up to die on the Cross (Jn 3:14, 8:28, 12:32, 34) but in the present context lifted up to Heaven. His crucifixion paved the way for His exaltation. Peter had used **hupsos**

Acts 2:33 "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.

Is this next statement not a manifestation of God's longsuffering. This would be one of the last chances for the Sanhedrin to reverse its rejection of Jesus for as Peter says in the next versus they are now dealing with the Holy Spirit.

**To grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins** - What is Peter describing? The way of salvation. Jesus had claimed the authority to grant forgiveness of sins in Luke 5

Seeing their faith (CONTEXT = Lk 5:17-19), He said, "Friend, **your sins are forgiven you.**" 21 The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? **Who can forgive sins, but God alone?**" 22 But Jesus, aware of their reasonings, answered and said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts? 23 "Which is easier, to say, '**Your sins have been forgiven you,**' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? 24 "But, so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,"—He said to the paralytic—"I say to you, get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home." (Luke 5:20-24+)

**To grant repentance to Israel** - Peter is not restricting this offer to Israel, but uses it because the ones to who he is speaking are "Israel." Of course they did not believe that they were in need of repentance. They were like those described in Mt 3:7-8 "But when he (JOHN THE BAPTIST) saw many of the **Pharisees and Sadducees** coming for baptism, he said to them, "**You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?**" 8 "Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance."

Is **repentance** a component of salvation? Peter clearly thinks so, speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit! Notice the word "**grant.**" What does that suggest about **repentance**? In other words is **repentance** something we can just decide to do in our own strength? Clearly that is not the picture Peter paints. Instead he is teaching that repentance is a gift from God (cf 2 Ti 2:25+, Ro 2:4+). Of course, we still need to respond to this gift and repent! This is the mystery of God's sovereignty and man's free will. Frank Stagg, New Testament Theology, p. 119 says "Men cannot achieve but only receive repentance, yet they must receive it. By faith a man receives Christ into his innermost person; and Christ, as a transforming presence reverses the course of that life from self-trust to trust in God, from self-assertion to self-denial. This conversion is the reversal of the Fall, in which man sought to find the whole meaning of his existence within himself." (Quoted by [Bob Utley](#))

**Spurgeon** - MARK HIS GIFTS. Repentance. This does not mean to give space for repentance, nor to make repentance acceptable, but to give repentance itself. What is repentance? (1) It is a change of mind. (a) He can give thee to change thy mind about all the

past, so that the things which pleased thee shall grieve thee, that which charmed thee shall disgust thee. (b) He can also change thy mind as to the present and the future, so that instead of looking for present pleasure thou wilt find thy delight in future glory realised by faith. (2) It includes a most needful sense of sin, and the Saviour can give thee this by His Spirit. (3) He can work in thee desires after holiness and hatred of every false way; He can take the guile out of thy soul as well as the guilt out of thy life. ([Reference](#))

**Repentance** (3341) ([metanoia](#) from **meta** = after + **noéo** = to understand) literally means "afterthought" or "to think after" and implies a change of mind. From the NT uses, it is clear that **metanoia** means however much more than merely a change of one's mind but also includes a complete change of heart, attitude, interest, and direction. **Metanoia** is a conversion in every sense of the word. Jesus' teaching would support this conclusion for our Lord declared...

I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who **repents** (**metanoëo**), than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no **repentance** ([metanoia](#)). (Luke 15:7+)

In Luke 24:46-47 Jesus declared

"Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that **repentance** ([metanoia](#)) for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

Several times in Acts Luke described repentance as a necessary aspect of salvation...

(Acts 11:18) When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, "Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the **repentance** that leads to life."

**Comment** - Note that Acts 5:31 is God granting repentance to the **Jews** and in this verse granting repentance to the **Gentiles** (Greeks).

(Acts 20:21+) solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of **repentance** toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Bishop Ryle** offers this descriptive definition of repentance...

**Repentance** is a thorough change of man's natural heart, upon the subject of sin. We are all born in sin. We naturally love sin. We take to sin, as soon as we can act and think—just as the bird takes to flying, and the fish takes to swimming. There never was a child that required schooling or education in order to learn deceitfulness, selfishness, passion, self-will, gluttony, pride, and foolishness. These things are not picked up from bad companions, or gradually learned by a long course of tedious instruction. They spring up of themselves, even when boys and girls are brought up alone. The seeds of them are evidently the natural product of the heart. The aptitude of all children to these evil things is an unanswerable proof of the corruption and fall of man. Now when this heart of ours is changed by the Holy Spirit, when this natural love of sin is cast out, then takes place that change which the Word of God calls "**repentance**." The man in whom the change is wrought is said to "repent." ([Repentance](#))

One of the best [illustrations](#) of **genuine repentance** is found in Paul's description of the saints at Thessalonica...

For they themselves (other believers in Macedonia and Achaia) report about us (Paul, Silvanus and Timothy) what kind of a reception we had with you, and **how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven**, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come. (1 Th 1:9+; 1 Th 1:10+)

**C H Spurgeon** in a sermon entitled The Plumline (Amos 7:7, 8) wrote that...

**Side by side with that faith, God puts true repentance.** When a man attempts to convert his fellow-man, he gives him a sham repentance, or perhaps he tells him that there is no need of any repentance at all. Certain preachers have been telling us, lately, that it is a very easy matter to obtain salvation, and that there is no need of repentance; or if repentance is needed, it is merely a change of mind. That is not the doctrine that our fathers used to preach, nor the doctrine that we have believed. That faith, which is not accompanied by repentance, will have to be repented of; so, whenever God builds, he builds repentance fair and square with faith. These two things go together; the man just as much regrets and grieves over the past as he sees that past obliterated by the precious blood of Jesus. He just as much hates all his sin as he believes that his sin has been all put away. (Amos 7:7-8 The Plumline)

**Related Resources:**



- [Great articles on repentance primarily from Puritan writers](#)
- Word study on the verb "Repent" - [metanoeo](#)
- [What is repentance and is it necessary for salvation?](#)

**And forgiveness of sins** - As with repentance, forgiveness of sins is also a gift from God. Human beings cannot in their own strength repent nor bring about forgiveness. This is a work of God. What an incredible gift from God - sins past, present and future, completely forgiven because they were all borne by our Substitute Christ Jesus (cf Jn 19:30+).

**Spurgeon** on gift of **Forgiveness**. (1) He can pass an act of amnesty and oblivion for all thy sin. "I have blotted out thy sins like a cloud, and as a thick cloud thy transgressions."(2) When full forgiveness comes it brings with it the eternal removal of the penalty. The forgiven man cannot be punished. (3) With pardon there shall come a restoration of every privilege.

**Forgiveness** (859)(**aphesis** from **aphiemi** = action which causes separation and is in turn derived from **apo** = from + **hiemi** = put in motion, send) literally means to send away or to put apart, a letting go, a leaving behind, a removal. **Aphesis** refers to a **remission** as when one remits (pardons, cancels) a debt, or releases then from an obligation. To release from captivity as figuratively used by Jesus in His opening synagogue sermon in Lk 4:18+.

**Aphesis** is used four more times in Acts all in context of salvation in the Name of Jesus...

Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.(Acts 2:38)

"Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins." (Acts 10:43)

"Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you,(Acts 13:38)

to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.' (Acts 26:18)

**C H Spurgeon** - Jesus, our Lord, once crucified, dead and buried, now sits upon the throne of glory. The highest place that heaven affords is his by undisputed right. It is sweet to remember that the exaltation of Christ in heaven is a representative exaltation. He is exalted at the Father's right hand, and though as Jehovah he had eminent glories, in which finite creatures cannot share, yet as the Mediator, the honours which Jesus wears in heaven are the heritage of all the saints. It is delightful to reflect how close is Christ's union with his people. We are actually one with him; we are members of his body; and his exaltation is our exaltation. He will give us to sit upon his throne, even as he has overcome, and is set down with his Father on his throne; he has a crown, and he gives us crowns too; he has a throne, but he is not content with having a throne to himself, on his right hand there must be his queen, arrayed in "gold of Ophir." He cannot be glorified without his bride. Look up, believer, to Jesus now; let the eye of your faith behold him with many crowns upon his head; and remember that you will one day be like him, when you shall see him as he is; you shall not be so great as he is, you shall not be so divine, but still you shall, in a measure, share the same honours, and enjoy the same happiness and the same dignity which he possesses. Be content to live unknown for a little while, and to walk your weary way through the fields of poverty, or up the hills of affliction; for by-and-by you shall reign with Christ, for he has "made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign for ever and ever." Oh!, wonderful thought for the children of God! We have Christ for our glorious representative in heaven's courts now, and soon he will come and receive us to himself, to be with him there, to behold his glory, and to share his joy.

## Message For All Seasons

Read: Acts 5:31-42

Lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! —John 4:35

I'm a novice at growing flowers. But I've learned to appreciate the difference between annuals and perennials. Every spring I usually buy trays of annual bedding plants. Once in the ground, they immediately take root. Their brief life always ends with the autumn frosts, and the soil lies barren until my next annual spring planting. I prefer to plant perennial flowers. They go on living from year to year, and regularly bloom, flower, and reproduce.

Writer Eugene Harrison describes the evangelistic efforts of New Testament believers as "perennial" in nature. They didn't pour all their energies into once-a-year evangelistic efforts. Instead, according to Harrison, sharing the good news of Christ was "the

supreme concern of every believer, every day in the year, in every place." In Acts 5:42 and 8:4, the scope of their witness is clear: They shared Christ and the gospel in the temple, in their homes, and in the marketplace, using the Spirit-given methods of preaching, teaching, and personal testimony.

Jesus taught that the season for spiritual harvest is always today (John 4:35). And the apostle Paul said that "now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

Be assured, there's never a time when the harvest is out of season. The fields are white today.

Help us, Lord, to be a lifeline  
To a dying world today,  
Bringing hope to hopeless people  
As we share salvation's way. —Sper

Witnessing for Christ is never out of season.

By Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**Acts 5:32 "And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."**

KJV Acts 5:32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

- **And we are witnesses of these things** Acts 5:29; 1:8; 2:32; 10:39-41; 13:31; Luke 24:47,48; John 15:27; 2 Cor 13:1; Heb 2:3
- **And so is the Holy Spirit** John 15:26; 16:7-14; Heb 2:4; 1 Peter 1:12
- **Whom God has given to those who obey Him** Acts 2:4,38,39; 10:44; John 7:39
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE WITNESS OF THE APOSTLES AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

**And we are witnesses of these things** - More literally this reads "we are His witnesses of these **sayings**" for the Greek word for "things" is **rhema** (used in Acts 5:20) and usually refers to the words which one speaks. As an aside, the oft used saying "Go to the world and preach the Gospel. If necessary use words" (probably falsely attributed to Francis of Assisi) is NOT Biblical. How will they hear without someone preaching? (Read Ro 10:13-15, 17+) And so empowered by the Spirit, Who gave the apostles boldness to speak, they unashamedly proclaimed the Gospel.

Believers are not spectators but witnesses! Are you in the grandstands or on the playing field (so to speak)?

**William Barclay** - **Witnesses** are essentially people who speak from first-hand knowledge. They know from personal experience that what they say is true; and it is impossible to stop people like that, because it is impossible to stop the truth. (Acts of the Apostles)

**Witnesses** (3144) (**martus/martys**) describes one who has seen and/or experienced something or someone and who testifies to what they saw. The apostles were simply obeying their Lord's charge to "be My **witnesses** (**martus/martys**) both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Acts 1:8+)

All of Luke's uses of **martus** -

Lk. 11:48; Lk. 24:48; Acts 1:8; Acts 1:22; Acts 2:32; Acts 3:15; Acts 5:32; Acts 6:13; Acts 7:58; Acts 10:39;  
Acts 10:41; Acts 13:31; Acts 22:15; Acts 22:20; Acts 26:16

**Robertson** on the **Holy Spirit Whom God has given** - Peter claims the witness of the Holy Spirit to the raising of Jesus Christ, God's Son, by the Father.

**Toussaint** - the Holy Spirit was corroborating their testimony by supernaturally enabling them to preach with boldness and to perform miracles. This same Spirit is given to all who believe in Christ (Ro 8:9+).

**And so is the Holy Spirit Whom God has given** (cf 1 Jn 5:7) - The Holy Spirit is the supernatural witness, Who takes the truth

about Jesus and applies it to the heart of the hearer. In the Upper Room the night before His crucifixion, Jesus had promised His disciples that "When the Helper comes, Whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, Who proceeds from the Father, **He will bear witness (martureo) of Me.**"

Also notice that just as repentance and forgiveness are both gifts from God, so is the Holy Spirit! And what a Gift He is! Can I ask you figuratively speaking "Have you opened your "Gift" from the Father?" (cf Lk 11:13+) Or do you still see the Spirit as an impersonal "it"? Jesus said He would be our Helper, not just to witness but to live this supernatural Christian life. Be sure to "open the Gift" from your Father!

**To those who obey Him** - **Obey** is in the present tense signifying continual obedience to God. Of course perfect obedience to God is impossible and the only way one can achieve (imperfect) continual obedience to Him is by relying on the enabling power of the indwelling Spirit. Thus it is clear that the phrase those who obey Him signifies those who have placed their faith in Jesus. Their obedience does not save them but it is the fruit in keeping with repentance and faith which demonstrates that they are genuinely saved. Beloved, don't let anyone mislead you into believing you can be saved and not obey God. That is a lie from the pit of hell and will damn the one who believes it to hell! If someone is granted repentance and forgiveness of sins, they also receive the Spirit Who enables a lifestyle the "general direction" of which is toward Heaven, not toward Hell. If an individual NEVER demonstrates some evidence of obedience to God, of a lifestyle in keeping with God's will and Word, then there is reason to be concerned that this person's profession of faith in Christ was just that -- a profession of Christ, but one without possession of the Spirit of Christ (cf 2 Cor 13:5+)

Some interpret this obedience as an individual obeying John 6:29 where Jesus said "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent." While the reference to obedience may relate to this passage, it is vital that those who believe in Jesus obey Him.

As **MacArthur** says "the saved are described as **those who obey Him**. They are characterized by obedience (cf. Ro 1:5+; Heb. 5:9+), which is synonymous with saving faith.

**I Howard Marshall** writes that "Peter adds pointedly that it is those who **obey** God (verse 29!) who receive the Spirit." (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries – Acts) (Bolding added)

**Bob Utley** - Obedience is a lifestyle choice! We must obey by believing the gospel. We must continue in obedience to enjoy its fruits (cf. Luke 6:46)(= **ED**: "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not **do** [present tense = as your lifestyle or habitual practice] what I say?").

**Obey** (3980)(**peitharchoo** from **peitho** = to obey + **archo** = rule, authority) means to obey one in authority. In Acts 27:21 Paul reminds the shipwrecked mariners that they should have given heed to or obeyed his counsel. Peter uses this verb twice in his speech both times referring to obedience to God (Acts 5:29, 32). The only other NT use is Titus 3:1+ where Paul instructs Titus to "Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to **be obedient**, (present tense) to be ready for every good deed."

**Vincent** - Not often used in the New Testament to express obedience, the most common word being πακούω. Sometimes πείθω is used. But this word, in itself, is the only one of the several in use which expresses the conception of obedience exclusively. πακούειν is to obey as the result of listening to another: πείθεσθαι is to obey as the result of persuasion. This is the special term for the obedience which one owes to authority (ρχή). It occurs four times in the New Testament: Acts 5:29, 32; 27:21; Tit. 3:1; and in every case, of obedience to established authority, either of God or of magistrates. In Acts 27:21, where it is used of the ship's officers hearkening to Paul's admonition not to loose from Crete, Paul speaks of his admonition as divinely inspired; compare 27:10. In ch. 4:19, Peter and John say hearken (κούειν). That is a mere listening to or considering the proposition made to them. This is a deliberate course of action.

Although the verb for obedient is different than Peter uses in Acts 5, the same idea is seen in Luke's description of believers in Acts 6

The word of God (= The Gospel) kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests **were becoming obedient (hupakouo)** to the faith (in this context = The Gospel). (Acts 6:7+)

**NET Note** proposes that in the present context "The implication, of course, is that the leadership is disobeying God."

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**TELLING TRUTH** In both Luke and Acts, the Holy Spirit was clearly associated with witnessing. Almost every time the Spirit was mentioned, someone testified about God or proclaimed the good news of Christ. If we are filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18), if we are letting him lead us (Galatians 5:16), we, too, will speak of Christ. Think back over your conversations from the previous week. If you realize that you rarely or never mentioned God to others, it is a good sign that you are "stifling the Holy Spirit" (1

**Acts 5:33 But when they heard this, they were cut to the quick and intended to kill them.**

KJV Acts 5:33 When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.

- **they were cut to the quick** Acts 2:37; 7:54; 22:22; Luke 4:28,29; 6:11; 11:50-54; 19:45-48; 20:19
- **and intended to kill them** Acts 9:23; Ge 4:5-8; Ps 37:12-15,32,33; 64:2-8; Mt 10:21,25; 23:34,35; Mt 24:9; John 15:20; 16:2
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**CONVICTED BUT NOT CONVERTED  
THEY CONSPIRE MURDER**

Words that should have been received as a gift of God's mercy, while convicting their evil consciences did not result in circumcision of their hard hearts. There is however an interesting statement in Acts 6:7 that "a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith." Were any of these from the Sanhedrin?

The question this raises for believers today is whether the Gospel we present is the whole message of this life, for if it is, we can be assured it will be convicting and make some hearers angry, but it can also save others. If our message NEVER incites a negative reaction, then perhaps we need to reassess whether the content of our message is the same as that of Jesus and apostles. Just a thought to consider.

**But when they heard this, they were cut to the quick**- They were figuratively "sawn through!" The knife cut deep! This effect on the Sanhedrin is related to the convicting witness of the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:32, cf Jn 16:7-11). As Phillips says "At this point in the Spirit's convicting work, a person either repents or reacts. With the Sanhedrin there was an immediate reaction. How to get rid of the disciples-that was the question."

However [Robertson](#) says "Here it is rage that cuts into their hearts, not conviction of sin as in Acts 2:37"

**Cut** (1282)(**diaprio** from **dia** = through + **prio** = to saw, cut with a saw) means to saw through, to divide with a saw (used literally in Lxx of 1 Chr 20:3), hence cut to the quick meaning infuriated or enraged, cut or torn emotionally. This reaction resulted in Stephen being stoned because "Now when they heard this, they were **cut to the quick**, and they began gnashing their teeth at him." (Acts 7:54+).

**Vincent** quips **diaprio** is "A strong figure for [exasperation!](#)"

**MacArthur** adds that **diaprio** "literally refers to cutting something in two—an apt metaphor to describe the power of the Word of God (Heb. 4:12). Instead of yielding to the truth, the authorities hardened their hearts. As they had done to Jesus (cf. John 5:16; 7:32; 8:59; 10:31; 11:57) in spite of the abundant evidence, they rejected the apostles' teaching and violently opposed them as blasphemers. (MacArthur New Testament Commentary)

**And intended to kill them** - **Intended** is [boulomai](#) in the imperfect picturing them deliberating over and over and deciding to execute them! How interesting that these men used the same verb ([anaireo](#)) for the apostles as they did for Jesus, Luke recording "The chief priests and the scribes were seeking how they **might put Him to death** ([anaireo](#)); for they were afraid of the people." (Lk 22:2, cf use in Lk 23:32) and again in Acts 2:23 "this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and **put Him to death** ([anaireo](#))."

[Robertson](#) - The point in Acts 4:7 was whether the apostles deserved stoning for curing the cripple by demoniacal power, but here it was disobedience to the command of the Sanhedrin which was not a capital offence. "They were on the point of committing a grave judicial blunder" (Furneaux).

**MacArthur** - The apostle Paul would later face the same reaction. Acts 9:22-23 records that after his conversion he "kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this Jesus is the Christ. And when many days had elapsed, the Jews plotted together to do away with him." "The wicked plots against the righteous," wrote David, "and gnashes at him with his teeth. The wicked have drawn the sword and bent their bow... to slay those who are upright in conduct. The wicked spies upon the righteous, and seeks to kill him" (Ps. 37:12, 14, 32) (Ibid)

**Kill** (put to death, execute) (337)([anaireo](#) from **ana** = up + **haireo** = to take) literally means to take up or lift up (from the ground), and here means to take away, kill or murder (usually in a violent way - cf Mt 2:16). In fact most of the uses of **anaireo** are in an

active sense referring to literal killing or putting to death (Mt. 2:16; Acts 5:36; 7:28; 9:23, 24, 29; 16:27; 23:15, 21, 27; 25:3) as well as public execution (Luke 23:32; Acts 2:23; 10:39; 12:2; 13:28; 22:20; 26:10).

**Vincent** adds this note on **anaireo** - Lit., to take up and carry away; so that the Greek idiom answers to our taken off. So **Shakspeare**: "The deep damnation of his **taking off**." Macbeth, i., 7. "Let her who would be rid of him, devise His speedy **taking off**." Lear, v., 1.

**Bob Utley** - It is surprising to modern Bible readers that religious leaders could plan murder. Remember these were Sadducees committed to the writings of Moses, which commanded that a blasphemer must be stoned to death. These leaders thought they were acting on God's behalf and in conformity to His word (cf. Lev. 24:10-16).

**Acts 5:34 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.**

KJV Acts 5:34 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;

- **But a Pharisee** Acts 23:7-9; Ps 76:10; John 7:50-53
- **Gamaliel** Acts 22:3
- **a teacher of the Law** Luke 2:46; 5:17
- **gave orders to put the men outside for a short time** Acts 4:15
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DIVINE DELIVERANCE BY A MAN

What is happening in this section (Acts 5:35-39) where the Spirit is allowing an unregenerate man to give a lengthy speech? Let's ask it this way -- what was the likely fate of the 12 apostles, those men who had seen Jesus alive after His resurrection? Death, probably death by stoning or death at the hands of the Romans, but either way an event that would bring a sudden end to the infant church as all the leaders were snuffed out! So what does the sovereign, **in control God** do? He raises up a "Cyrus like" figure (who allowed the Jews to return and rebuild the Holy Temple - Ezra 1:1-2ff), a "King Artaxerxes like" figure (who allowed Nehemiah to return and rebuild the wall around the Holy City - Neh 2:1-7,8), a man named Gamaliel who did not believe in Jesus. God used this man to deliver His apostles from almost certain execution. Why? Because God was not finished with them! He would use them to build His Church and when their job was accomplished, He would call them home ([See David Guzik's summary](#) of how the apostles died as recorded in secular writings). And beloved, God will use you to build His Church until your work is accomplished. That may mean He sends a "Gamaliel" in your life to deliver you, for our God is able to do whatever He desires in order to fulfill His good and acceptable and perfect will! Remember that our God is always behind the scenes and always controls the scenes He is behind.

**Life Application Bible Commentary** adds that "God used Gamaliel, a Pharisee and respected member of the Jewish community, to help free the apostles. This has always been a fascinating strategy of God. He often has used the most unlikely sources to help his people or to get his message across. For Joseph, he used Pharaoh; with Nehemiah, he used Artaxerxes; with Daniel, God used Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius; for the Jews to return to their homeland, he used Cyrus of Persia. Proverbs 21:1 says, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases" (niv). Elsewhere, the Old Testament records God using rebels, adulterers, thieves, and even a donkey to get his message across. (Life Application Bible Commentary – Acts)

**But** - This **term of contrast** is no "minor" **but**, but a **but** that serves to **buttress** (so to speak) the lives and ministry of the apostles! The last two words in the preceding Greek text are "anelein autous" translated "**to kill them!**" **BUT**...God's will and way and power trumped and triumphed over men's menacing **machinations!** It always does beloved. Dear follower of Jesus, be encouraged that regardless of whatever "**Sinister Sanhedrin**" comes against you seeking to oppress, depress or destroy you, remember that God allowed it and God is able to deliver you from it! Amen and amen! Be encouraged as you meditate on this truth and listen to Chris Tomlin's song "**Our God is Greater!**"

Water You turned into wine  
Opened the eyes of the blind  
There's no one like you  
None like you

Into the darkness You shine  
Out of the ashes we rise  
There`s No one like you  
None like you

Our God is greater, our God is stronger  
God You are higher than any other  
Our God is Healer, awesome in power  
Our God, Our God

**A Pharisee named Gamaliel** - This is interesting because the high priests were Sadducees and many if not most of the members of the Sanhedrin were Sadducees. Pharisees and Sadducees did not usually get along, but here there clearly was an exception, presumably because Gamaliel was so highly respected. It is also fascinating that here God uses a Pharisee named Gamaliel to save His apostles, whereas in Acts 9:1 (Acts 22:4) He allowed a Pharisee named Saul to slaughter the saints! And the further irony is that this same Saul was educated under this same Gamaliel! (Acts 22:3) God's ways are higher than our ways! (Isa 55:9).

The [Mishnah](#) helps us understand why **Gamaliel** standing and speaking would exert such persuasive power on the hard hearts of the stiff-necked Sanhedrin...

“Since Rabban Gamaliel the elder died there has been no more reverence for the law; and purity and abstinence died out at the same time.” (Sotah 9:15)

#### Related Resources:

- [Who was Gamaliel in the Bible?](#)
- [Gamaliel - Wikipedia](#)

**Pharisee** (5330)([pharisaios](#)) is transliterated from the Hebrew **parash** (06567 - to separate) from Aramaic word **peras** (06537) ("Peres" in Da 5:28-note), signifying to separate, owing to a different manner of life from that of the general public. (See more detailed notes from [William Barclay](#)) (See also [Uitley's note below](#))

**Teacher of the Law** (3547)([nomodidaskalos](#) from **nomos** = law + **didaskalos** = teacher) literally meant a teacher of the Jewish law. The nomodidaskalos is equal to **lawyers** (nomikós [3544](#)), and **scribes** (grammateús), the very term Luke uses to describe these men in Lk 5:21 indicating they were interchangeable terms. Used 3 times in Scripture - Lk. 5:17; Acts 5:34 ("Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law"). Paul's use of **nomodidaskalos** in 1 Ti 1:7 describes men who were not concerned about truly learning the law, or knowing God but were corrupting the doctrine of the church by illegitimately using the Law of Moses. In other words they desired the kind of prestige accorded rabbis in Judaism, only they sought this prestige within the church. They were like the Pharisees denounced by Jesus, describing those who desired to be "called Rabbi by men." (Mt 23:7). Bock adds that "They functioned like religious parliamentarians for the sect and were Pharisees themselves. The Pharisees were a strict movement that had little popular appeal, but they held much influence in key places."

**MacArthur on nomodidaskalos, teacher of the law.** - Also called lawyers (Lk 7:30; 10:25; 11:45, 46, 52; 14:3; Matt. 22:35) and most commonly scribes (sixty-three times in the New Testament), they were professional scholars specializing in the interpretation and application of the law. They were commonly, but not exclusively, Pharisees (though distinguished from them by being mentioned separately; Lk 5:21, 30; 6:7; 11:53; 15:2; Matt. 5:20; 12:38; 15:1; 23:2, 13, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29; Mark 7:1, 5; John 8:3; Mark 2:16 refers to "the scribes of the Pharisees," and Acts 23:9 to "the scribes of the Pharisaic party"). Such scribes were also honored by being called rabbis ("great ones"), though others who taught the Word of God might also receive that title (cf. John 1:38, 49; 3:2; 6:25, where it is given to Jesus). (Ibid)

**Respected by all the people** - People is [laos](#) which gives us our words [lay people](#) (those not belonging to the clergy) and [laity](#).

**Respected** (5093)([timios](#) literally speaks of things which are costly, precious or valuable (Re 17:4-note) or of persons who are "precious" and thus are highly regarded, esteemed or honored (Acts 5:34, 17:34).

**Stood up in the Council** - He stood up to speak to the **Council** ([sunedrion](#)).

**And gave orders to put the men outside for a short time**- This reminds us of when the jury retires for deliberations on a murder case, in this case the defendants were also the potential victims of the verdict. But as is often the case in jury panels, there is a foreman, but there is also often a person who is very persuasive who tries to convince the jury members one direction or the other. Gamaliel was that person in this deliberation.

**Gave orders** (Commanded) (2753)(keleuo) means to set in motion, urge on. In the NT, used generally with the meaning of to command, order something to be done. **Louw-Nida** - "to state with force and/or authority what others must do."

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**Robertson on Gamaliel** - Gamaliel (Gamaliēl). The grandson of **Hillel**, teacher of Paul (Acts 22:3), later president of the Sanhedrin, and the first of the seven rabbis termed "Rabban." It is held by some that he was one of the doctors who heard the Boy Jesus in the temple (Luke 2:47) and that he was a secret disciple like Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, but there is no evidence of either position. Besides, he appears here as a loyal Pharisee and "a doctor of the law" (nomodidaskalos]). This word appears already in Luke 5:17 of the Pharisaic doctors bent on criticizing Jesus, which see. Paul uses it of Judaizing Christians (1 Tim. 1:7). Like other great rabbis he had a great saying: "Procure thyself a teacher, avoid being in doubt; and do not accustom thyself to give tithes by guess." He was a man of judicial temper and not prone to go off at a tangent, though his brilliant young pupil Saul went to the limit about Stephen without any restraint on the part of Gamaliel so far as the record goes. Gamaliel champions the cause of the apostles as a Pharisee to score a point against the Sadducees. He acts as a theological opportunist, not as a disciple of Christ. He felt that a temporizing policy was best. There are difficulties in this speech of Gamaliel and it is not clear how Luke obtained the data for the address. It is, of course, possible that Saul was present and made notes of it for Luke afterwards. Had in honour of all the people ([timios panti tōi laōi]). Ethical dative. Τιμιος [Timios] from τιμη [timē], old word meaning precious, dear. The men (τους νθρώπους [tous anthrōpous]). Correct text as in verse 35, not "the apostles" as Textus Receptus.

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### Bob Utley's [Special Topic Pharisees](#) -

I. The term had one of the following possible origins:

- A. "To be separate." This group developed during the Macaabean period (this is the most widely accepted view), and separated themselves from the populace in order to keep the oral traditions of the Mosaic Law (i.e., Hasidim).
- B. "To divide." This is another meaning of the same Hebrew root (BDB 827, BDB 831 I, KB 976); both mean "dividing." Some scholars say it meant an interpreter (cf. Neh. 8:8; 2 Tim. 2:15).
- C. "Persian." This is another meaning of the same Aramaic root (BDB 828, KB 970). Some of the doctrines of the Pharisees have much in common with Persian Zoroastrian dualism (see Special Topic: Personal Evil).

II. There have been several theories as to who made up the Pharisees.

- A. a theological sect of early Judaism (i.e., Josephus)
- B. a political group from the Hasmonean and Herodian periods
- C. a scholarly group of Mosaic interpreters helping the common person understand the Mosaic Covenant and the oral traditions that surround it
- D. a lay movement of scribes, like Ezra and the Great Synagogue, in competition to the priestly leadership of the temple

They were formed out of conflict with

- 1. non-Jewish overlords (esp. Antiochus IV)
- 2. aristocracy versus laity
- 3. those committed to covenant living versus the common Jew of Palestine

III. Our information about them comes from

- A. Josephus, who was a Pharisee
  - 1. Antiquities of the Jews
  - 2. Wars of the Jews
- B. the New Testament
- C. later Jewish sources

IV. Their major doctrines.

- A. Belief in a coming Messiah, which was influenced by interbiblical Jewish apocalyptic literature like I Enoch.
- B. Belief that God is active in daily life. This was directly opposite from the Sadducees (cf. Acts 23:8). Many

Pharisaic doctrines were theological counterpoints to the doctrines of the Sadducees.

C. A belief in a physically-oriented afterlife based on earthly life, which involved reward and punishment (cf. Dan. 12:2).

D. Belief in the authority of the OT as well as the Oral Traditions (Talmud). They were conscious of being obedient to the OT commands of God as they were interpreted and applied by schools of rabbinical scholars (Shammai, the conservative and Hillel, the liberal). The rabbinical interpretation was based on a dialogue between rabbis of two differing philosophies, one conservative and one liberal. These oral discussions over the meaning of Scripture were finally written down in two forms: the Babylonian Talmud and the incomplete Palestinian Talmud. They believed that Moses had received these oral interpretations on Mt. Sinai. The historical beginning of these discussions started with Ezra and the men of the "Great Synagogue" (later called the Sanhedrin).

E. Belief in a highly developed angelology. This involved both good and evil spiritual beings. This developed from Persian dualism and the interbiblical Jewish literature.

F. Belief in the sovereignty of God, but also the exercise of human free will (yetzers).

#### V. The strengths of the Pharisaical movement.

A. They loved, respected, trusted God's revelation (i.e., all of it, including Law, Prophets, Writings, and Oral Traditions).

B. They were committed to being righteous followers (i.e., daily faith and life) of God's revelation. They wanted a "righteous Israel" to fulfill prophetic promises of a new, prosperous day.

C. They advocated an equality with Judaistic society, which included all levels of people. In a sense, they rejected priestly (i.e., Sadduceean) leadership and theology (cf. Acts 23:8).

D. They championed a valid human component to the Mosaic Covenant. They fully asserted God's sovereignty, but also held to the need for the exercise of human free will (i.e., the two yetzers).

E. The NT mentions several respected Pharisees (i.e., Nicodemus, Rich Young Ruler, and Joseph of Arimathea).

VI. They were the only sect of first century Judaism to survive the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Romans in a.d. 70. They became modern Judaism.

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#### Dr Bob Utley's [Special Topic Gamaliel](#) -

##### I. The Name

A. The name means "God is my rewarder."

B. He is known as "the elder" or Gamaliel I to distinguish him from a later relative, also very active in Jewish leadership.

##### II. The Man

A. Tradition says he was the grandson of Hillel.

B. Other traditions say he had ties to the royal family of Herod (i.e. Agrippa I).

C. Tradition says he was president of the Sanhedrin, but this probably refers to Gamaliel II.

D. He was one of seven highly respected rabbis who was given the title Rabban.

E. He died before A.D. 70.

##### III. His Theology

A. He was a highly respected rabbi.

B. He was known for caring for and staying in control with the scattered Jews of the Diaspora.

C. He was also known for his concern for the socially disenfranchised (his Takkanot often began with "for the benefit of humanity").

1. orphans

2. widows

3. women



- D. He was Paul the Apostle's rabbinical mentor in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 22:3).
- E. In Acts 5:33–39 he gives sage wisdom about how to handle the early church in Palestine.
- F. This rabbi was so highly thought of that at his death it was said, "When Rabban Gamaliel the elder died the glory of the Torah ceased and purity and saintliness (lit. 'separation') perished" (Sot. 9:15, taken from Encyclopedia Judaica, vol. 7, p. 296).
- G. It must be stated that Gamaliel's motivation in this case is uncertain. He may have been asserting the wisdom of Pharisees against the impulsiveness of the Sadducees. These two powerful Jewish sects exploited each other at every opportunity!

(Dr. [Bob Utley](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org) [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org))

**Acts 5:35 And he said to them, "Men of Israel, take care what you propose to do with these men.**

KJV Acts 5:35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.

- **take care what you propose to do with these men** Acts 19:36; 22:26; Jer 26:19; Mt 27:19
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### GOOD ADVICE BE WARY!

**And he said to them, "Men of Israel** - This term is used in the NT only in Acts (Acts 2:22, 3:12, 5:35, 13:16, 21:28). [Robertson](#) says it is a "covenant name and...the stock of Israel."

**Moody Bible Commentary** - As was typical of the Pharisees, Gamaliel believed that God is in control of everything happening, but he also believed in free will. He cautioned the Sanhedrin against exercising their free will in opposition to God's will

**Vincent on men of Israel** - Literally, *men, Israelites*. An honorable and [conciliatory](#) form of address (Ed: Remember a Pharisee is speaking to Sadducees). The term Israelite gradually gave place to that of *Jew*; but Israel was the sacred name for the Jews, as the nation of the theocracy, the people under God's covenant, and hence was for the Jew his special badge and title of honor. (Word Studies in the New Testament)

**Take care what you propose to do with these men** - "Pay close attention" (NET) NIV has "consider carefully what you intend to do to these men."

**Take care** (4337) ([prosecho](#) from **pros** = before, toward + **echo** = hold) means literally to hold to, toward or before. Originally it was followed by the word "the mind" (nous) but at times "the mind" was omitted but still the idea of "the mind" was implied. **Gamaliel** is commanding them (present imperative) to hold their mind to what they do to the apostles.

**Acts 5:36 "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.**

KJV Acts 5:36 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.

- **claiming to be somebody** Acts 8:9; Mt 24:24; 2 Th 2:3-7; 2 Peter 2:18; Jude 1:16; Rev 17:3,5
- **and a group of about four hundred men joined up with him** Acts 21:38; 2 Peter 2:2
- **all who followed him** Mt 24:26
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### EXAMPLE OF THE FATE OF THEUDAS

**For** - Term of explanation. What is Gamaliel explaining. Clearly he is explaining to the rest of the Sanhedrin why they needed to be

cautious regarding their treatment of the apostles.

**Some time ago Theudas rose up** - The name Theudas although an unusual name to us today was a not uncommon name in the first century. Commentaries discuss the identity of Theudas but the fact is that there are definitive facts concerning this man (E.g., see v38 in [Robertson](#)). The important point is that he "rose up", attracted a sizable following.

**Claiming to be somebody** - Some propose he claimed to be the "Messiah," but we cannot validate that from historical records. The fact that he was claiming to be somebody suggests an ego inflation problem and an inordinate desire for self-promotion.

**And a group of about four hundred men joined up with him** - Whatever his cause was or his claim was (? Messiah), he clearly was able to attract a following. **Joined up** is *prosklino* used only here in the NT and meaning literally to incline toward and in the passive voice as here meaning to attach oneself to or be loyal to Theudas.

**Related Resource:**

- [Who was Theudas in the Bible?](#)

**But he was killed** - This is Gamaliel's main point. The rebellion or "movement" died because the leader Theudas (**was killed** - *anaireo* used in Acts 5:33+).

**And all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing** - The word **followed** is interesting as it is *peitho* which means to have confidence. The KJV renders it "**as many as obeyed him.**" The idea of in this context is that Theudas had caused these men to come to his point of view and course of action (imperfect tense - they kept on holding to his point of view). He must have been a very convincing leader, but regardless of his "charismatic" personality, his actions came to naught.

Vincent comments "Note the word for obeyed ( *πειθοντο*), implying the persuasive power of Theudas' boasting."

**Gamaliel's** example reminds me a man named [David Koresh](#) leader of the [Branch Davidians](#) who was able to attract a number of followers many of whom were killed when he was killed in the horrible incident in Waco, Texas.

**Were dispersed** (1262)(*dialuo* from *dia* = denotes separation + *luo* = to loose) means to become separated, scattered in different directions, go to pieces. Be dissolved, dispersed. Used only here in the NT.

**Acts 5:37 "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.**

KJV Acts 5:37 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.

- **Judas** Luke 2:1; 13:1
- **he too perished** Job 20:5-9; Ps 7:14,15; 9:15,16; Mt 26:52; Luke 13:1,2
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## EXAMPLE OF THE FATE OF JUDAS

**After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census and drew away some people after him** - Criswell writes that "This rising, which had occurred in 8-6 B.C., was hardly more than a pitiful preview in Galilee of the later insurrection of Theudas. Its chief result was the permanent death of its leader, Judas, in contrast to Messiah Jesus, who rose from the dead and attracted numerous followers who were willing to testify throughout the empire that they knew Jesus to be alive."

**Wikipedia** has this note - **Judas of Galilee**, or Judas of Gamala, was a Jewish leader who led resistance to [the census imposed for Roman tax purposes by Quirinius](#) in Iudaea Province around 6 CE. He encouraged Jews not to register and those that did had their houses burnt and their cattle stolen by his followers. He began the "fourth philosophy" of the Jews which Josephus blames for the disastrous war with the Romans in 66-70 CE. ([Click for full note](#)).

**Bob Utley** on **days of the census** - Josephus (cf. [Antiq. 18:1:1](#); Wars 2:8:1) tells us that Augustus ordered a tax to be levied on the Jews, soon after Archelaus was dethroned and [Quirinius](#) was made legate of Syria (i.e. about A.D. 6-7). These census for taxation purposes occurred every fourteen years, but took years to complete.

**Drew away** (868)([aphistemi](#) from **apo** = separation of one thing from another + **histemi** = stand and is the root of our English = apostasy) literally means to stand off from and transitively means to cause to revolt or to alter their allegiance.

**NET Note**- The verb **aphistemi** as a transitive means "cause to revolt" as used in Josephus, [Antiquities. 8.7.5](#) (8.198), 20.5.2 (20.102);

**He too perished** 622)([apollumi](#) from **apo** = away from or wholly + **olethros** = state of utter ruin <> **ollumi** = to destroy) means to destroy utterly, to kill (Mt 2:13).

**And all those who followed him were scattered** - Since the leader was dead and all followers scattered this uprising also came to naught.

**Scattered** (1287)([diaskorpizo](#) from **dia** = an intensifies or denotes separation + **skorpizō** = to dissipate) means to scatter abroad or disperse.

**Vincent on diaskorpizo** - It is rather the dispersing, making to fly in every direction." Hence used of the pursuit of a routed enemy (Luke 1:51); of the prodigal scattering his goods; making the money fly, as we say (Luke 15:13); of the wolf scattering the sheep (Matt. 26:31).

Clearly all the members of the Sanhedrin were familiar with both **Theudas** and **Judas of Galilee** and knew the details of their uprisings. Luke's main point is not why the uprisings occurred, etc, but the fact that both uprisings failed on their own.

**Acts 5:38 "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;"**

KJV Acts 5:38 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:

NET Acts 5:38 So in this case I say to you, stay away from these men and leave them alone, because if this plan or this undertaking originates with people, it will come to nothing,

- **stay away from these men** Acts 5:35; John 11:48
- **for if this plan or action is of men, it will be overthrown** Nehemiah 4:15; Job 5:12-14; Ps 33:10,11; Pr 21:30; Isa 7:5-7; 8:9,10; Isa 14:25; Lam 3:37; Mt 15:13; 1 Cor 1:26-28; 3:19
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **GAMALIEL'S COMMAND "HANDS OFF!"**

**So in the present case, I say to you, Stay away from these men and let them alone** - Both the verbs (in red) are commands in the aorist imperative. Gamaliel is commanding the Sanhedrin not to procrastinate or delay but to do this now and without delay.

**Stay away** (Stand off)(868) is the same verb [aphistemi](#) used in Acts 5:37 to describe those who were drawn away to follow Judas of Galilee. This reminds me of the command I hear in military movies "**Stand down!**" which Webster's Dictionary defines as "a relaxation of status of a military unit or force from an alert or operational posture."

**Let...alone** (863)([aphiemi](#) from **apo** = prefix speaks of separation, putting some distance between + **hiemi** = put in motion, send) conveys the basic idea of an action which causes separation, total separation. Literally [aphiemi](#) means to send from one's self, to put away, let alone. It is as if Gamaliel is saying "hands off" of these men.

**For** - Term of explanation.

**If this plan or action is of men, it will be overthrown** - NET = "if this plan or this undertaking originates with people, it will come to nothing." Gamaliel is implying that if this was God's plan or action, it would not have been overthrown, so it must have originated from men not God.

**Overthrown** (2647)([kataluo](#) from **kata** = down, intensifying verb **luo** = loosen) means literally to loosen down (unloose) and then to utterly destroy or to overthrow completely. Jesus used this verb to describe the fate of the Temple (a prophecy fulfilled in 70 AD) that not one stone would be left upon another, but all would "be torn down" (Mt 24:2) That is an excellent "metaphorical" description of

what happened to these two uprisings.

**Vincent on kataluo** - Lit., be loosened down. Used of the dilapidation of the temple (Luke 21:6), and of the dissolution of the body under the figure of striking a tent (2 Cor. 5:1). (Vincent's note on kataluo used in Mk 13:2 = "A very graphic word, implying gradual demolition.")

**Acts 5:39 but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God."**

KJV Acts 5:39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

- **but if it is of God** Acts 6:10; Ge 24:50; 2 Samuel 5:2; 1 Kings 12:24; Job 34:29; Isa 43:13; 46:10; Da 4:35; Mt 16:18; Luke 21:15; 1 Cor 1:25; Rev 17:12-14
- **you may even be found fighting against God** Acts 7:51; 9:5; 23:9; Ex 10:3-7; 2 Kings 19:22; Job 15:25-27; 40:9-14; Isa 45:9; 1 Cor 10:22
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GAMALIEL'S CONVINCING LOGIC

**But** - On the other hand.

**If it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them**- This is the second alternative which is first class conditional signifying something like this - Since it is of God (that is assumed true), then they cannot be stopped." Gamaliel is reasoning with the Sanhedrin that since they cannot overthrow these men, for to do so one must first overthrow God.

See **Overthrow** above = [kataluo](#)

**NET Note** on "if" - This is expressed in a first class condition, in contrast to the condition (**If**) in Acts 5:38b, which is third class. As such, v. 39 is rhetorically presented as the more likely option.

**Moody Bible Commentary** - The greater question concerns Gamaliel's advice. Was he right in stating that if Christianity was a movement of God, the Sanhedrin would not be able to stop it? And if it was not of God, then would it not succeed? Gamaliel was both right and wrong. He was certainly right in arguing that if God was with this new movement, even the Romans would not be able to control it. In addition, history shows a movement can succeed through human effort and determination without divine intervention. From Luke's perspective, however, of the advance of the church in Acts, Gamaliel was right. The church advanced from Jerusalem to Rome. It could not be stopped because it was a movement of God.

**Toussaint** has an interesting comment on Gamaliel's argument - Seeing what would come of this movement would tell them if it were of human origin or from God. Interestingly this speech was, in one sense, an apologetic for the church of Jesus Christ given by a representative of the church's enemies: to try to stop God's work would be like fighting against God! (BKC)

**Horton** - We must keep in mind that this was a Pharisee saying this. That is, the inspired record makes it clear that Gamaliel said this; his recorded words were the conclusions of his own thinking, human reasoning, not God's truth. In a sense, Gamaliel was a hypocrite, for he did not accept Jesus as Lord, nor did he admit that the signs and wonders done by the apostles showed Jesus was different from the former leaders who died. It is true, of course, that what is from God cannot be overthrown (2 Chron. 13:12). It is true also that it is foolish to try to use physical means to overthrow spiritual forces. But it is not true that everything of human origin is soon overthrown and its followers scattered. There are many pagan religions, false doctrines, evil movements, and modern cults that maintain a following after many years. The judgments at the end of this age will bring them all to an end and the things of God will continue. (BORROW [Acts Commentary](#))

**William MacDonald** - If this Christian religion were not of God, the best thing would be to leave it alone, and it would soon fade out. To combat it would only make it more determined to survive. (This argument is not altogether true. Many godless institutions have flourished for centuries. In fact, they have gained more adherents than the truth. But the argument is true in God's time, if not in man's.) (BBC)

**John Stott** - "We should not be too ready to credit Gamaliel with having uttered an invariable principle . . . the Gamaliel principle is not a reliable index to what is from God and what is not."

**Kent**: The soundness of Gamaliel's advice may be questioned. It is, of course, true that ultimately God's program will emerge

victorious, and human schemes will perish. It is also true that many times hasty action is foolish because it is taken before all the facts are known. Nevertheless, one cannot always judge from short-term results whether an enterprise is God's work or not, and we may not have time enough to wait for the final issue. The measure is not the pragmatic one of apparent success, but its conformity to the revealed will of God. Present temporary failures (or successes) may not be final.

**Or else you may even be found fighting against God** - Recall that these are the religious leaders of Israel. They think that their job is defend the honor of God. Of course they are deceived, but because they thought they were fighting for God, they did not want to create a situation in which they would be fighting against God.

**Fighting against God** is *theomachos* (God-fighting" or "God-fighters") which was used in classical Greek to describe fatal fighting against a so-called god.

**Acts 5:40 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.**

KJV Acts 5:40 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.

- **after calling the apostles in** Acts 4:18
- **they flogged them** Pr 12:10; Mt 10:17; 23:34; Mark 13:9; Luke 20:10; John 19:1-4; 2 Cor 11:24
- **ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus** Acts 5:28; 4:17-21; Isa 30:10; Amos 2:12; Micah 2:6
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **SANDHEDRIN ACQUIESCES TO GAMALIEL'S ARGUMENT**

**They took his advice** - The phrase "**took his advice**" is the verb [peitho](#) which means to persuade or convince so the NIV rendering is more accurate - "**His speech persuaded them.**"

**And after calling the apostles in** - A better translation is they "**summoned**" them because the verb *proskaleo* is a legal technical term for [summoning](#). Normally the jury comes in to present their verdict, but here is a reversal as the defendants come into before the jury.

**They flogged them** - Notice they inflicted the physical punishment first before giving their commands. The logic may have been surely after a good flogging they will have ears to receive our orders. The Sanhedrin still did not comprehend that these were Spirit filled men, who feared God, not men. And they did not understand that these men had been warned by Jesus that they would be flogged and to be forewarned is to be forearmed (Mt 10:17, Mt 23:34 - using related verb [mastigoo](#)).

**Bob Utley** - This was not the same as the Roman flogging (*mastix*, cf. Acts 22:24–25), which Jesus endured. This referred to the Jewish beating with rods (cf. Deut. 25:3; i.e. *derō*, Luke 12:47–48; 20:10–11; 22:63). It was very painful, but not life-threatening.

**Moody Bible Commentary** - Jewish flogging was done with leather whips (see pix) . They gave 13 lashes on the chest and 26 on the back for a total of 39 lashes (40 minus one).

**Phillips** - The law of Moses permitted flogging-"forty stripes save one" was the usual formula (based on Deut. 25:3). (Exploring Acts)

**Guzik** - Beaten can also be translated skinned; the beating they received stripped the skin off of their backs. "It was no soft option; people were known to die from it, even if this was exceptional. It was meant to be a serious lesson to offenders." (Marshall)

**Flogged (1194)(dero)** literally means to remove the skin ([flay](#) = strip off skin) and in the NT is used to depict the action of whipping, beating, thrashing or scourging in a manner calculated to take off the skin (Mt. 21:35; Mk 12:3, 5; Lk 20:10, 11; Acts 5:39, Acts 16:37 = Paul and Silas beaten in public; Acts 22:19 = Paul confesses to beating Christ followers). **Dero** is used with its literal meaning once in the Septuagint (2 Chr 29:34). Jesus used this same verb when He prophetically promised His disciples that they would be "**flogged.**" (Mk 13:9). While it may not have been the life-threatening flogging inflicted by the Romans on Jesus, it was still excruciatingly painful to be [flayed](#)!

**Holman Bible Dictionary** on **flogging** - Punishment by repeated lashes or blows of a whip or rod(s). The Old Testament recognized flogging as a form of punishment (Deuteronomy 25:1-3 ) though limiting it to 40 blows so that the neighbor who was

punished would not be degraded. Children were disciplined with rods (Proverbs 23:13-14 ). Floggings were sometimes inflicted unjustly (Proverbs 17:26 ; Isaiah 53:5 ).Jesus warned His disciples that they would face flogging (Matthew 10:17 ; beatings, Mark 13:9 ) in the synagogue. Paul had believers flogged in his days as a persecutor of the church (Acts 22:19-20 ). The apostles were flogged by order of the Sanhedrin (Acts 5:40 ). Paul received the “**forty lashes less one**” at the hands of the synagogue five times (2 Corinthians 11:24 ). Paul was also **beaten with rods** three times (2 Corinthians 11:25 ), perhaps at the hands of Gentile officials as at Philippi (Acts 16:22-23 ). ([Flogging](#))

#### Related Resource:

- [Flagellation \(Flogging\)](#)
- Picture of a slave's scars secondary to flogging

**Ordered them not to speak in the Name of Jesus**- Although Luke uses the Name "Jesus," it is highly unlikely the Sanhedrin officials pronounced His Name. But clearly they conveyed their order of no more "Jesus' talk." Recall that a person's name represented the Person, His authority and His attributes.

**Horton** adds "They recognized that "the name of Jesus," His character and authority, was central to the apostles' message, that without this focus on who Jesus is, the new movement would die out." (BORROW [Acts Commentary](#))

How foolish and futile was their command for they might as well have ordered the sun not to shine as to command the disciples to keep silent concerning the Son!

**Ordered** (3853)([paraggello](#) from **para** = beside, alongside + **aggello** = to announce) means to pass on an announcement from one person to another at one's side. **Paraggello** was often (as in this context) used like a military command which demanded that the subordinate obey the order from the superior (cf 2Ti 4:1-[note](#)). The picture conveyed by the use of this verb is that it called for unhesitating and unqualified obedience by the hearers. But Peter and the apostles had already made it clear that they would disobey order from the Sanhedrin, lest they be guilty of disobeying the order from the Almighty! (cf Acts 5:29+). God's commands should always take priority in our lives, but we need to be sure they are truly His commands! And of course we obey with a full understanding of the possible consequences!

**And then released them** - This is the same verb [apoluo](#) used by Peter when he described Pilate's release of Barabbas instead of Jesus. In Acts 4:21 "When they had threatened them further, they let them go ([apoluo](#)) (finding no basis on which to punish them) on account of the people."

**Released** (630)([apoluo](#) from **apó** = marker of dissociation, implying a rupture from a former association, separation +**luo** = loose) is used often of sending a person or a group away from someone (Mt 14:15, 22, 23, 32, etc).

All of Luke's uses of **apoluo** in Luke and Acts -

Lk. 2:29; Lk. 6:37; Lk. 8:38; Lk. 9:12; Lk. 13:12; Lk. 14:4; Lk. 16:18; Lk. 23:16; Lk. 23:17; Lk. 23:18; Lk. 23:20; Lk. 23:22; Lk. 23:25; Jn. 18:39; Jn. 19:10; Jn. 19:12; Acts 3:13; Acts 4:21; Acts 4:23; Acts 5:40; Acts 13:3; Acts 15:30; Acts 15:33; Acts 16:35; Acts 16:36; Acts 17:9; Acts 19:41; Acts 23:22; Acts 26:32; Acts 28:18; Acts 28:25

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**SUFFERING FOR CHRIST** - Peter and John were warned repeatedly not to preach, but they continued despite the threats. Believers today should also live as Christ has asked, sharing the faith no matter what the cost. You may not be beaten or thrown in jail, but you may be ridiculed, ostracized, or slandered. To what extent are you willing to suffer for the sake of sharing the gospel with others? (Life Application Bible Commentary – Acts)

**Acts 5:41 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.**

KJV Acts 5:41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

- **rejoicing that they had been considered worthy** Acts 16:23-25; Isa 61:10; 65:14; 66:5; Mt 5:10-12; Luke 6:22; Ro 5:3; 2 Cor 12:10; Php 1:29; Heb 10:34; James 1:2; 1 Peter 4:13-16
- **to suffer shame for His name** Heb 12:2

- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ON MISSION TO SUFFER REJOICING AS WE GO!

**So they went on their way** - Went is the verb [poreuo/poreuomai](#) which literally means to go from one place to another as when one travels. It is interesting that this same verb **poreuomai** can mean to go on a mission (Mt 2:20, Mt 8:9), which is apropos for these 12 were men on a mission with a divine commission! (Mt 28:19-20+, cf Acts 1:8+). Is not every saved sinner now set apart on a divine mission for the Master?! Do you see yourself in this passing, God hating world (cf 1 Jn 2:17+) as a man or woman on mission with the best news the spiritually dead people you encounter could ever hear?

**From the presence** is [prosopon](#) meaning literally from the faces of the **Council** ([sunedrion](#))!

As **Marshall** says "we have a concrete example of that 'rejoicing in suffering' which should be the hallmark of the Christian under persecution (1 Pet. 4:13; cf. Matt. 5:11f.; Rom. 5:3f.; 2 Cor. 6:10; 1 Pet. 1:6f)." (TNTC - Acts)

**Rejoicing** ([5463](#))([chairō](#)) means to be "cheer" full, calmly happy or well-off (THINK ABOUT THAT AS YOU IMAGINE THE BACKS OF THE APOSTLES). **Chairō** is used in a whole range of situations in which the emotion of joy is evoked, in this case paradoxically "evoked" by the thought of suffering for Jesus! The present tense pictures them as continually rejoicing. Beloved, His Name is not in this verse, but the power and presence of the Holy Spirit indwelling these twelve men is poignantly and powerfully present. Just try in reliance on your old nature to rejoice after being beaten with up to 39 lashes from a cat-o-nine tails! Simply put, such **rejoicing** is not natural, but only be supernatural! Such **rejoicing** is "impossible," but it is "Him-possible!" These men were Spirit filled, their inner beings permeated with and controlled by the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Oh, for a church full of sold out, surrendered saints, ready to march out into the world carrying the banner of the Gospel for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ! Amen and amen!

In His sermon on the mount Jesus declared...

"Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. **Rejoice** ([chairō](#)) and **be glad** ([agalliao](#)) for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.(Matthew 5:11,12+)

**Comment** - Both commands are in the present imperative which calls for this to be our habitual response to persecution for the sake of the Name of Jesus! This response is not our natural reaction to persecution, and necessitates a supernatural enablement as we jettison self-reliance, surrender and rely on the Holy Spirit for the power to do the impossible!

**That they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name** - This is one of those statements that defy our imagination. This exemplifies the paradox of Christianity - the way up is down, the way to gain is to lose, the way to be strong is to be weak, the way to receive grace is to be humble, etc. Here Luke describes the paradoxical privilege of suffering for Jesus. It makes no sense to the watching world! But it makes all sense to those who are waiting for another world! Our suffering today may not be 39 lashes, but you can rest assured that if you take a stand for His Name, then all who are in the world and hate His Name will stand against you one way or another. Paul made it crystal clear when he wrote

"For to you it has been granted (perfect tense = it stands granted. VERB MEANS IN ESSENCE TO RECEIVE A GIFT OF GRACE!) for Christ's sake (THIS QUALIFIER IS CRUCIAL!), not only to believe in Him, BUT ALSO to suffer for His sake." (Php 1:29+)

Christians who do not understand this basic principle are in danger of being caught off guard when the sure suffering comes upon them which is why Peter warned us

"Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you, but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, **keep on rejoicing**, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may **rejoice** ([chairō](#) - present tense - continually) with exultation ([agalliao](#) = present tense = continually jumping for joy)." (1 Peter 4:12-13+).

In this you **greatly rejoice**, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been **distressed by various trials**, 7 so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 1:6-9+)

**Vincent** comments "This is an instance of what rhetoricians style an oxymoron, from ξύς, sharp, and μωρός, foolish; a pointedly foolish saying, which is witty or impressive through sheer contradiction or paradox, as laborious idleness, sublime indifference. In this case the apostles are described as dignified by indignity."

**Stanley Toussaint** points out that "One of the subthemes of Acts is **JOY**, because a victorious church is a joyful one. This is seen in Acts 2:46–47+ and numerous other times (Acts 5:41; 8:8, 39; 11:23; 12:14; 13:48, 52; 14:17; 15:3, 31; 16:34; 21:17)....A victorious church rejoices in God's working in spite of persecution—and even on account of it, as here." (BKC) (**Ed**: I would add to Toussaint's comment that a church that is "victorious" is a Spirit filled church, for joy is the fruit of the Spirit.)

**Considered worthy** (2661)(**kataxioo** from **kata** = + **axioo** = to think worthy from **axios** = worthy) means to deem worthy, to be regarded as worthy or thought of as deserving. All NT uses are [passive voice](#) which is important as this indicates the "worthiness" comes from an outside source. All three uses describe believers and two of the uses are in the context of salvation (Lk 20:35, 2 Th 1:5). As Lewis says in his excellent explanation of **kataxioo** they are not made worthy, but declared worthy by God and by His grace.

[Practical Word Studies in The New Testament](#) adds a note on **considered worthy** - A believer is not saved because he remains faithful through the sufferings of this life; he is saved because he believes in Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord. However, when he suffers in this world and endures through the suffering, he is counted worthy of God's kingdom (**ED**: BUT HE IS ENABLED TO SUFFER BY THE SAME POWER THAT ENABLED HIM TO BE SAVED! cf Gal 3:3+). He does not disappoint God. He proves his grit—that he is truly a man or a woman of God. He is worthy to enter heaven, for he has proven his faith."

**Suffer shame** (be dishonored, be treated shamefully) (818)(**atimazo** from **a** = without + **time** = honor) means to be treated with indignity or to cause to be disgraced or degraded. As [Robertson](#) says the apostles "felt honored to be dishonored!"

**For His Name** - For the Lord Jesus Christ, for everything that speaks of His character and person.

**Horton on for His Name** - That is, they suffered for the sake of all that "the Name," and therefore Christ's character and nature, includes, especially His Messiahship, Deity, Saviorhood, and Lordship (see Phil. 2:9-10+). (BORROW [Acts Commentary](#))

The irony is that the very **Name** the Sanhedrin refused to pronounce, is the very **Name** the apostles rejoiced to suffer shame for!

Peter must have learned this truth well as he repeated it again in his first epistle

If you are reviled for the **NAME** of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.  
15 Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; 16 but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this **NAME**. (1 Peter 4:14-16+)

**Kent Hughes** - I once heard [Richard Wurmbrand](#) describe this kind of joy. When he was in a Romanian prison, his tormentors ripped chunks of flesh out of him, and he had the scars to prove it. He was sentenced to solitary confinement, and for weeks or even months on end no one would speak to him in his tiny cell. Amazingly, during all of that there were times when he was overcome with joy. He would actually stand up in his weakened state and dance around his cell, confident that the angels were dancing with him. He was released from prison unexpectedly, and as he left the prison dressed like a scarecrow, with his teeth rotted and in terrible shape, he met a peasant woman on the road carrying a basket of beautiful strawberries. When she offered him one, he started to take it but then said, "No thanks. I am going to fast." He went home to his wife, and they prayed and fasted as a memorial to the joy he had experienced in prison, asking God for the same kind of joy outside prison. (See [Acts: The Church Afire](#))

**Bob Utley** on **suffering** - Jesus plainly said that His followers would suffer. Please read Matt. 5:10–12; Jn 15:18–21; 16:1–2; 17:14; Acts 14:22; Ro 5:3–4; 8:17; 2 Cor. 4:16–18; Phil. 1:29; 1 Th 3:3; 2 Tim. 3:12; Jas 1:2–4. Also notice how in First Peter Jesus' suffering (cf. 1 Peter 1:11; 2:21, 23; 3:18; 4:1, 13; 5:1) is to be emulated by His followers (cf. 1 Peter 1:6–7; 2:19; 3:13–17; 4:1, 12–19; 5:9–10).

**Related Resource:**

- [What does the Bible say about suffering?](#)
- [Is suffering for Christ always going to be a part of being a follower of Christ?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about affliction?](#)

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**PRAISE GOD FOR PERSECUTION** - Have you ever thought of persecution as a blessing, as something worth rejoicing about? This beating suffered by Peter and John was the first time any of the apostles had been physically abused for their faith. These men knew how Jesus had suffered, and they praised God that he had allowed them to be persecuted like their Lord. If you are mocked or persecuted for your faith, it isn't because you're doing something wrong but because God has counted you "worthy to suffer



dishonor for the sake of the name." So don't resent opposition, but regard it as a sign that you have been faithful to Christ. (Life Application Bible Commentary – Acts)

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### **THE PRIVILEGE OF SUFFERING**

It is an honor and a privilege to suffer with Christ and be treated by the world the way it treated Him. "The fellowship of His sufferings" is a gift from God (Phil. 1:29; 3:10). Not every believer grows to the point where God can trust him with this kind of experience, so we ought to rejoice when the privilege comes to us (Acts 5:41).

Christ is with us in the furnace of persecution. When the three Hebrew children were cast into the fiery furnace, they discovered they were not alone (Dan. 3:23-25). The Lord was with Paul in all of his trials, and He promises to be with us "to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:20). In fact, when sinners persecute us, they are really persecuting Jesus Christ (Acts 9:4).

"Suffering" and "glory" are twin truths that are woven into the fabric of Peter's letter. The world believes that the absence of suffering means glory, but a Christian's outlook is different. The trial of our faith today is the assurance of glory when Jesus returns (1 Peter 1:7-8). This was the experience of our Lord (5:1), and it shall also be our experience. (BORROW [Pause for Power - Warren Wiersbe](#))

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**The Joy of Suffering for Christ** - Guy de Brez, a French minister, was prisoner in the Castle of Tournay, in Belgium. A lady who visited him said she wondered how he could eat, or drink, or sleep in quiet. "Madam," said he, "my chains neither terrify me nor break my sleep; on the contrary, I glory and take delight therein, esteeming them at a higher rate than chains and rings of gold, or jewels of any price whatever. The rattling of my chains is like the effect of an instrument of music in my ears — not that such an effect comes merely from my chains, but it is because I am bound therewith for maintaining the truth of the gospel."

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### **Bridges Of Grace**

Read: Acts 5:33-42

They departed . . . , rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. —Acts 5:41

Imagine for a moment that you are driving through the desert in Southern California and you see the magnificent Golden Gate Bridge spanning the dried-up bed of "Three Frogs Creek" on the outskirts of "Turtle Soup Junction." What a ridiculous sight that would be!

So too, the Lord never displays His power and grace at an inappropriate time or place, but He always provides according to the difficulty of the hour. He does not impart strength until it is needed.

We shudder when we think of what some of God's children are enduring because of their faithfulness to the Savior. Many have chosen the path of intense suffering rather than following the line of least resistance. I wonder, would we do the same?

Of course, the Lord does not ask us to make such a commitment before it is necessary. And we can be sure that when we "suffer for His sake" (Philippians 1:29), He will provide whatever we need to endure the pain.

As servants of Christ, we can take one step at a time and be confident that whether we come to a dried-up gulch or a surging river, the Lord's bridges of grace will be just right to allow us safe passage to the other side.

Each day God sends His loving aid  
To strengthen you and me;  
We need to use today's supply  
And let tomorrow be.  
—Anon.

God gives enough grace for each trial we face.

By Mart DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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**No Possessions Held Them Back** - In ancient Rome, crowds by the tens of thousands would gather in the Colosseum to watch as Christians were torn apart by wild animals. Paul Rader, commenting on his visit to this famous landmark, said, "I stood uncovered to the heavens above, where He sits for whom they gladly died, and asked myself, 'Would I, could I, die for Him tonight to get this gospel to the ends of the earth?'" Rader continued, "I prayed most fervently in that Roman arena for the spirit of a martyr, and for the working of the Holy Spirit in my heart, as He worked in Paul's heart when He brought him on his handcuffed way to Rome." Those

**Unpopular Cause** - Those first believers turned to Christ with the full understanding that they were espousing an unpopular cause that could cost them everything. Shortly after Pentecost some were jailed, many lost all their earthly goods, a few were slain, hundreds were 'scattered abroad.' They could have escaped all this by the simple expedient of denying their faith and turning back to the world. This they steadfastly refused to do. To make converts, we are tempted to play down the difficulties and play up the peace of mind and worldly success enjoyed by those who accept Christ. We will never be completely honest with our hearers until we tell them the blunt truth that, as members of a race of moral rebels, they are in a serious jam, and one they will not get out of easily. If they refuse to repent and believe on Christ, they will most surely perish. If they do turn to Him, the same enemies that crucified Him will try to crucify them. (A. W. Tozer)

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### Counted Worthy

This weighty burden thou dost bear,  
This heavy cross,  
It is a gift the Lord bestows,  
And not a loss;  
It is a trust that He commits  
Unto thy care,  
A precious lesson He has deigned  
With thee to share.

Rejoice that He so honors thee  
And so esteems  
Of highest worth; the crown of thorns  
With Him to wear,  
And all the suffering of that crown  
With Him to bear,  
That by and by His glory, too,  
With Him thou'lt share.

- Annie Johnson Flint

**Acts 5:42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.**

KJV Acts 5:42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

- **And every day** Acts 5:20,21; 2:46; 3:1,2-10; Luke 21:37; 22:53; 2 Timothy 4:2
- **in the temple and from house to house** Acts 20:20
- **they kept right on** Acts 4:20,29; 2 Samuel 6:22; Ro 1:15,16; Gal 6:14
- **teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ** Acts 8:5,35; 9:20; 17:3; 1 Cor 2:2; Eph 4:20,21
- Acts 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## TESTIFYING EVERY DAY IN EVERY PLACE JESUS IS THE MESSIAH

This is an interesting description because it is the very same activity that the Sanhedrin had ordered them to cease and it the same activity for which the Sanhedrin had them arrested. But here the Sanhedrin do not have them arrested! Why not? I am not sure, but ultimately I believe God's sovereign plan was to grow His Church through the apostles teaching and preaching and it follows that they would have experienced His hand of blessing and protection. Indeed, we see the fruit of their labors in Acts 6:7+ because "the number of the disciples (BELIEVERS) continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith." The heat had been turned up against the apostles witnessing for Jesus, but the result was that it was only "spreading the fire!"

**And every day** - "Day after day" (NIV). NAB paraphrases it "all day long." This speaks of zeal and perseverance. The apostles **redeemed the time!** When time on earth is finite and eternity is forever, saints created for eternity must redeem their short time on

earth! Are you living each day for Jesus, living it with the solemnity that it could be your last. **Jonathan Edwards** America's greatest theologian understood the brevity of time in view of eternity and even as a young man wrote "Resolved: Never to lose one moment of time, but to improve it in the most profitable way I possibly can. Resolved: to live with all my might while I do live."

Beloved, time that is past you can never recall,  
Of time to come, you are not sure at all;  
Only the present is now in your power,  
Therefore, redeem and improve every hour.

**Guzik** - This challenges each of us as followers of Jesus. They continued where we may have stopped. We often find the threat of social rejection enough to make us keep quiet about who Jesus is and what He did for us. We need to have the apostles' courage and determination to stand firm for Jesus Christ.. Spurgeon spoke of this kind of bold heart: "Now, I charge every Christian here to be speaking boldly in Christ's name, according as he has opportunity, and especially to take care of this tendency of our flesh to be afraid; which leads practically to endeavours to get off easily and to save ourselves from trouble. Fear not; be brave for Christ. Live bravely for him who died lovingly for you." Spurgeon also challenged the cowardly heart: "Yet you are a coward. Yes, put it down in English: you are a coward. If anybody called you so you would turn red in the face; and perhaps you are not a coward in reference to any other subject. What a shameful thing it is that while you are bold about everything else you are cowardly about Jesus Christ. Brave for the world and cowardly towards Christ!"

**Warren Wiersbe - D.L. Moody** was fearless in his witness for Christ and sought to speak about spiritual matters to at least one soul each day. "How does your soul prosper today?" he would ask; or, "Do you love the Lord? Do you belong to Christ?" Some were offended by his blunt manner, but not a few were led to Christ then and there. "The more we use the means and opportunities we have," he said, "the more will our ability and our opportunities be increased." He also said, "I live for souls and for eternity; I want to win some soul to Christ." He was not satisfied only to address great crowds; he also felt constrained to speak to people personally and urge them to trust Jesus Christ. ([Wiersbe Commentary on Acts](#))

**In the temple** ([hieros](#)) - Don't miss the fact that they are boldly witnessing about Jesus in the very center of Jewish religion! The Temple complex, probably **Solomon's portico** (picture of Portico) and the surrounding grounds as this area allowed for large crowds. (See [this diagram of the Temple grounds](#) - note the right side of the picture faces East and that is the location of Solomon's Portico on the diagram.)

As an aside, this is the last time Luke mentions ministry in the Temple. Their horizons would soon expand in Acts 8:1+ in accord with Jesus' charge to be His witnesses "in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Acts 1:8+).

**In Solomon's portico** - The **Portico of Solomon** consisted of a set of magnificent pillars supporting a roof and open on the inner side facing the center of the temple complex. ([picture of Portico](#)) The Temple grounds adjacent to the Portico of Solomon would have been approximately 4 football fields in size which could have easily provided room for several thousand people.

**And from house to house** (cf Acts 2:46) - "So once again Satan outwitted himself." ([William MacDonald](#)) Perhaps this is going from one house church to another, but it does not exclude that they were going from one Jewish house to another! The apostles were blanketing the city. This reminds me of "cold turkey" evangelism. Have you ever gone door to door in a neighborhood to share the Gospel? The Mormons do it for a lie (for up to 2 years), and most Christians never do it for the truth! But not these apostles. They were men on mission!

Some commentators feel the phrase **house to house** describes "house churches" scattered throughout the city and that is certainly a possibility. While they could meet in the Temple, it would be more practical to follow up the Temple meetings and "do life" with the brethren in smaller, more intimate settings.

**AN ANCIENT STRATEGY** - The apostles taught from house to house. Home Bible studies are not new. As the believers needed to grow in their new faith, home Bible studies met their needs while introducing new people to the Christian faith. During later times of persecution, meeting in homes became the primary method of passing on Bible knowledge. Christians throughout the world still use this approach when under persecution. Meet regularly in a small group with other believers. (Life Application Bible Commentary – Acts)

**They kept right on teaching and preaching** (evangelizing about) **Jesus as the Christ** - They are teaching and preaching a Person, Jesus the Christ (cf Acts 8:35, Acts 11:20, Acts 17:18, 1 Cor 2:2, 2 Cor 4:5). Both these verbs (**teaching and preaching**) are in the **present tense** picturing these activities as their habitual practice, their lifestyle, if you will. How were they able to do this? The short answer is THEY weren't able! It was not them but it was the One in them, the Spirit Who was continually giving them the desire and the power to teach and preach the Good News that Jesus was the Messiah (cf Jn 16:14)! So when you begin going from house to house, do not attempt this as some legalistic endeavor but first pray and yield to the Holy Spirit Who will empower you for the task, even going before you to prepare hearts and then taking the Gospel Words you speak to convict hearts, regenerating those

who receive the Gospel of their salvation.

**Wiersbe on teaching and preaching** - Proclamation (Ed: evangelizing) must be balanced with instruction (see Acts 2:42) so that the sinners know what to believe and the new converts understand why they believed. The message cannot produce fruit unless the person understands it and can make an intelligent decision (Matt. 13:18-23). Believers cannot grow unless they are taught the Word of God (1 Peter 2:1-3). ([Wiersbe Commentary on Acts](#))

It is worth noting that the very last verse in the book of Acts echoes the truth in Acts 5:42

And he (PAUL) stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him, 31 preaching ([kerusso](#) - present tense) the kingdom of God (THE GOSPEL) and teaching (present tense) concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness ([parrhesia](#) = BOLDNESS), unhindered. (Acts 28:30, 31)

**Comment** - Clearly Paul was a Spirit filled man to the very end of his race! He was filled with the Spirit and thus filled with boldness to continually proclaim the Gospel. A good pattern for all of us saints nearing the end of our race. What do we have to lose? Maybe a little "face" with those who hate Jesus, but what difference should that make given that we shall soon be standing forever in His glorious presence!!!

**Teaching** ([1321](#))([didasko](#)) in the present tense means the apostles were continually teaching in such a way that the will of the hearers might become conformed to the Gospel they taught. They were doing exactly what the Sanhedrin had ordered them not to do! In Acts 5:28 the Sanhedrin reminded the apostles "**We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this Name.**"

**Preaching** (the Gospel, good news)([2097](#))([euaggelizo/euangelizo](#) from **eu** = good, well + **aggéllō** = proclaim, tell; English = evangelize) means to announce good news concerning something. **Euaggelizo** in its original sense could be used to refer to a declaration of any kind of good news, but in the NT it refers especially to the glad tidings of the coming kingdom of God and of salvation obtained through Jesus Christ's death, burial and resurrection. Most of NT uses of **euaggelizo** are translated "preach" or "preach the gospel," whichever fits more smoothly into the context. It is surprising that this is Luke's first use of this great verb in the book of Acts.

Here are all of Luke's uses of **euaggelizo** - Matt. 11:5; Lk. 1:19; Lk. 2:10; Lk. 3:18; Lk. 4:18; Lk. 4:43; Lk. 7:22; Lk. 8:1; Lk. 9:6; Lk. 16:16; Lk. 20:1; Acts 5:42; Acts 8:4; Acts 8:12; Acts 8:25; Acts 8:35; Acts 8:40; Acts 10:36; Acts 11:20; Acts 13:32; Acts 14:7; Acts 14:15; Acts 14:21; Acts 15:35; Acts 16:10; Acts 17:18;

**Jesus ([Iesous](#)) as the Christ** - Or "as the Messiah." The word **Christos** is translated Christ (both mean the "Anointed One"), but was obviously a synonym for Messiah. And especially in a Jewish context (the early church composed of Jews and in a Jewish city) would signify that they were teaching and preaching that Jesus was the Messiah that the Jews had been taught about and for Whom they had been waiting. He had arrived and which most of the nation missed Him when He was present on earth, now in the early days of the church thousands of Jews had come to a knowledge that Jesus was the Messiah and that He had come to save them from their sins, not from the Romans. In light of this truth, it is not surprising that some versions like the **NLT** and the **HCSB** render this verse as "**Jesus is the Messiah.**"

**Robertson** adds this note on **Jesus as the Christ** - "Jesus is the direct object of the participles *didaskontes* (teaching) and *euaggelizomenoi* (preaching or evangelizing) while "the Christ" (*ton Christon*) is the predicate accusative. These words give the substance of the early apostolic preaching as these opening chapters of Acts show, that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah of promise. Gamaliel had opened the prison doors for them and they took full advantage of the opportunity that now was theirs." (Word Pictures in the New Testament)

**John Phillips** - The Sanhedrin had now lost two rounds in its fight against the church.

**Warren Wiersbe** closes out this chapter with a pithy question - In his clever and convicting book *The Gospel Blimp*, the late Joe Bayly wrote: "Jesus Christ didn't commit the Gospel to an advertising agency; He commissioned disciples." That commission still stands. In your life, is it commission—or omission? ([Wiersbe Commentary on Acts](#))