

## Loyalty Challenged – Acts 5:17-42

### Introduction:

In the book of Acts we have discovered a vibrant church filled with people who love Jesus and who are committed to each other. Through them the Holy Spirit worked miracles, preached powerful sermons and many turned to Christ. We are told that people from Jerusalem and even surrounding areas were attracted to the fellowship of the church and the community kept growing. It is hard to imagine that anyone would be opposed to such a caring, helpful community, but the early church had its detractors. Some were determined to silence the church and disband their fellowship. How would the early church respond to such threats? This is the focus of this study.

### Arrest – Acts 5:17-24

1. Verse 17 starts with the word “But.” This transition word means a new situation is about to unfold that is connected to the old situation. What was the “old” situation described prior to verse 17? What is the contrast in verse 17?
2. Why are the Sadducees jealous? (v. 17) What did they do because they were jealous? (v. 18)
3. What happened in the night? (v. 19)
4. What instructions are given to the apostles (v.20)? What is the risk? How did the Apostles respond? (v. 21)
5. Imagine you are the officer, or jail guard, that went to the jail cell that morning to get the apostles. What would you have seen? (vss. 22-23)
6. Now what is the response of the religious leaders (v. 24)?
7. Why is it people are so amazed at what God can do? It seems we often forget who God is, and what it means that He is God. Do we ever forget that “nothing is impossible to God” (Matt. 19:26)?

## Take Two – Rearrest – Acts 5:25-33

8. What news was brought to the religious leaders (v. 25)? How might the Sadducees feel about this news?
9. The captain of the temple guard went and dealt with the apostles. What did he do according to verse 26, and why not use the usual force?
10. The apostles are made to stand before the High Priest and he accuses them of two things. What were they (v. 28)? How is Jesus referred to? Why do they not use his name?
11. Peter leads the response of the apostles. What do they say (vs. 29)?
12. In verse 30 Peter lays the blame on these religious leaders for what happened to Jesus. How does he describe the crucifixion? Compare that with Deuteronomy 21:23. According to this how did the Sadducees view Jesus? And, according to this same verse, how did God view Jesus?
13. In verse 31 Peter goes on to describe further what God has done for Jesus. List those things Jesus became as a consequence of his sacrificial death (cf. v. 31).
14. In verse 32 Peter says he is a witness of the fact that Jesus is exalted, a leader and Saviour. How would he “see” that?
15. Still in verse 32, who is the second witness (“A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” Deut. 19:15)? What is also implied in what Peter is saying here?

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**v. 31. Prince and a Saviour**—the first word expressing that *Royalty* which all Israel looked for in Messiah, the second the *Saving* character of it which they had utterly lost sight of. Each of these features in our Lord’s work enters into the other, and both make one glorious whole (compare Ac 3:15; Heb 2:10).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). [\*Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible\*](#) (Vol. 2, p. 178). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

## Unlikely Ally – Acts 5:33-42

16. What was the response of the religious leaders to the message of Peter? (v.33) Sound familiar (cf. John 5:18, etc)?
17. Who comes to the defense of the Apostles? Describe him. (v. 34)
18. What message does Gamaliel give to the council (vss. 35-39)? The heart of his advice is in verses 38-39. If it is of man, what will likely happen? If of God? And what if the disciples are doing God's work, where does that put the council? Have they been in that position before?
19. Gamaliel appears wise here, but look again. Who does he compare Jesus to? And is it true all things not from God fail? Finally, Gamaliel was famous for being a peacemaker. He may have saved the Apostle's lives, but what of his own soul? Did he really look at the evidence?
20. How does the council respond to Gamaliel's advice (v. 39). Does that mean the Apostles were off the hook? What three things were done to the apostles?
21. Arrested, tried and beaten for preaching Jesus. How might we respond to that kind of treatment? How did the disciples respond? (v. 41). What made them so happy?
22. How well did the disciples listen to the commands of the council according to verse 42? Why?

### Conclusion:

After Pentecost, the message of the resurrection of Jesus Christ spread rapidly in Jerusalem as Spirit-empowered witnesses shared the Gospel with the lost. Signs and wonders accompanied the preaching of the Word, and no one could deny that God was at work in a new way among His ancient people.

But not everybody was happy with the success of the church. The "religious establishment" that had opposed the ministry of Jesus, and then crucified Him,

took the same hostile approach toward the Apostles. “If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you,” said Jesus. “They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service” (John 15:20; 16:2, nkjv). These words were beginning to be fulfilled. It was 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 (Matt. 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.”<sup>2</sup>

**Song: 497 I’ll Live For Him**

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<sup>2</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [\*The Bible exposition commentary\*](#) (Vol. 1, p. 424). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.