

Acts 5:17-42 **Apostles Arrested by High Priest and Sadducees – Freed by Angel**

Apostles arrested and imprisoned

17 Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, 18 and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison.

Freed by Angel

19 But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, 20 Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life." 21 And when they heard that, they entered the temple early in the morning and taught.

Not in Prison when sent for

But the high priest and those with him came and called the council together, with all the elders of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. 22 But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported, 23 saying, "Indeed we found the prison shut securely, and the guards standing outside before the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside!"

Found Preaching in the Temple

24 Now when the high priest, the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things, they wondered what the outcome would be. 25 So one came and told them, saying, "Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!"

Brought before the High Priest

26 Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. 27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, 28 saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!"

We ought to obey God, rather than men

29 But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. 31 Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him."

Gamaliel's advice

33 When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them. 34 Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while. 35 And he said to them: "Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. 36 For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. 37 After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed. 38 And now I say to you, keep away from these men and

let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; ³⁹ but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it--lest you even be found to fight against God."

Apostles beaten and released

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

Apostles rejoice – Worthy to suffer for Jesus – Continued Preaching

⁴¹ So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. ⁴² And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ. NKJV

Facts Revealed:

✠ **With great Power the Apostles gave witness of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus.** [Acts 4:33]

✠ The Apostles were doing **great works of Healing and casting out demons** in the Temple area of Solomon's Porch, so much so that the people were attempting to place the sick where **Peter's shadow** might fall on them as Peter passed by, and **they were all healed.** [Acts 5:12-16]

Apostles arrested and imprisoned

✠ The High Priest and the Sadducees were filled with indignation and threw the Apostles into the common prison. [Acts 5:17-18]

✧ It is amazing to see how people in positions of power, ruling over the people, can be so filled with indignation over others who have done nothing but good in the community, that they attack the ones who did the good with total blind jealous hatred and fury as they seek ways to destroy them.

✧ People today are the same, seeking self exaltation they turn viciously on others they feel are competing for the same attention and honor. This is seen in the political, legal, and business arenas as well as the religious arena. The focus is on self, not on God or the good of the people.

Freed by Angel

✠ God stepped into the picture and sent an angel to bring the Apostles out of prison in such a way that the guards were unaware when the gates they guarded were opened and the Apostles were led out. The angel commanded the Apostles to: **"Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life."** [Acts 5:19-20]

✧ God demonstrated that He is able to override the actions of men when He so chooses, and this was one of those occasions in which God chose to take action.

✠ Early in the morning the Apostles obediently entered the Temple and taught the people. [Acts 5:21]

Not in Prison when sent for

✠ The High Priest and those with him (the Sadducees) called the Council together with all the Elders of the Children of Israel. They sent officers to the prison to bring the Apostles before the Council. [Acts 5:21]

✠ The officers reported back: **"Indeed we found the prison shut securely, and the guards standing outside before the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside!"** [Acts 5:22-23]

Found Preaching in the Temple

✠ Now when the High Priest, the Captain of the Temple, and the Chief Priests heard these things, they wondered what the outcome would be. [Acts 5:24]

- ✧ When we see God doing something that goes against reasonable human logic, it is only normal to wonder what the outcome will be, and how it will directly impact us.
- ✚ So one came and told them, saying, "**Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!**" [Acts 5:25]

Brought before the High Priest

- ✚ Then the Captain went with the Officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. [Acts 5:26]
 - ✧ The danger was real, because the people were convinced by the mighty signs they had witnessed and words they had heard through the Apostles.
- ✚ And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the High Priest asked them, saying, "**Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!**" [Acts 5:27-28]
 - ✧ As Jesus had done, the Apostles did nothing in secret concerning the message or the mighty works of the Holy Spirit as God was confirming the message with mighty signs and wonders done through the hands of the Apostles. All was done openly in the Temple area in full sight and hearing of the Priests and rulers.
 - ✧ The rulers knew what was going on and that knowledge is revealed in their words, so their choice to not believe was clearly their own. They chose to reject the message and the evidence that accompanied the message, which might have convinced them for their own salvation had they been willing. Therefore, they have no excuse to shield them on the Day of Judgment.

We ought to obey God, rather than men

- ✚ But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. [Acts 5:29-31]
 - ✧ Peter and the Apostles are still displaying the Power provided by the Holy Spirit in the form of Boldness in the face of the very ones who had been responsible for the Crucifixion of Jesus.
 - ✧ God's command takes precedence over contrary commandments of men.
 - ✧ Peter directly accused them of murdering Jesus on the cross.
 - ✧ Their witness to the council is that God has raised Jesus from the dead, and exalted Him to God's Own right hand and made Jesus to be Prince and Savior.
 - ✧ The purpose of Jesus the Savior, is to give Israel the right to repent of their sins and receive the blessing of forgiveness of those sins.
 - ✧ This is something the High Priest and the Council is unable to provide.
- ✚ And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him." [Acts 5:32]
 - ✧ The Apostles claim to be eyewitnesses of Jesus', death, resurrection, and ascension to His exalted position at the right hand of God.
 - ✧ The Holy Spirit Whom God has given to those who obey Him, is also Witness of these truths.
- ✚ When they (members of the Jewish Council) heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them (the Apostles). [Acts 5:33]

Gamaliel's advice

- ✚ Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while.

And he said to them: "Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing.

After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed.

And now I say to you, **keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing;**

but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it--lest you even be found to fight against God."

[Acts 5:34-39]

✧ Gamaliel was a Pharisee the teacher of Jewish Law held in respect by all the people, under whose instruction the Apostle Paul became the most zealous of the Pharisees instructed in the strictness of the traditions of the fathers and zeal toward God. [Acts 22:3]

✧ Gamaliel's advice was good advice;

✧ Keep away from these men and let them alone:

✧ If it is of man, it is doomed to failure.

✧ But if it is of God, no-one will be able to stop it, and you will be found fighting against God Himself.

Apostles beaten and released

✧ And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. [Acts 5:40]

✧ Even after being given good advice to which they agreed, the members of the Council were still so enraged at the public acceptance enjoyed by the Apostles, they could not consent to release them until they had beaten them and commanded them to desist from the message of their eyewitness testimony in an attempt to intimidate the Apostles into silence.

Apostles rejoice – Worthy to suffer for Jesus – Continued Preaching

✧ So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.

And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ. [Acts 5:41-42]

✧ The beating given by the members of the Council had the reverse effect on the Apostles than the Council members had desired.

✧ Instead of being intimidated into silence, the Apostles left the Council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the Name of their beloved Lord Jesus.

✧ This demonstrated tremendous power given to them by the Holy Spirit that enabled them to gain even more boldness and commitment to the message of Salvation through Jesus the Christ (Messiah).

✧ The Apostles did not withdraw into their own little group, but they boldly went into the Temple where they had been when they were arrested, and they continued to publicly and openly preach Jesus as the Messiah of Israel (the Christ), they did not cease their teaching.

✧ Peter later said:

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but **rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.** On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. [1 Peter 4:12-14]

✧ Paul worded it thus:

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, **if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.**
[\[Romans 8:14-17\]](#)