

ACTS 5:33-42

Introduction:

1. After being arrested again, Peter preaches again of Israel's unbelief and their part in the crucifixion of Jesus the Christ - Messiah. But also, he gives them hope in verses 31-32 if they (Israel) would repent and believe in Messiah (not in the accomplishments of the D.B.R.).
2. Also, it is important to see/understand that here we are still in Israel's Prophetic-Law-Covenant-Kingdom message program. Not a word has yet been said concerning the joint body in which today's believers are members.

*Not once have we come across phrases such as: "The dispensation of the grace of God" or "the gospel of the grace of God". Not once has there been an offer of salvation through faith in Christ's shed blood, nor that salvation is sent to the Gentiles.

3. So, these verses show God still dealing with the nation of Israel, and again it shows that God did not set Israel aside at Calvary! Here, He is still dealing with Israel in His exclusive mercy. He is not going to the Body-Gentiles yet. Now if Israel would have repented and believed, He would have proceeded through Israel to make disciples (Kingdom ones) of all nations. The Gentile nations would have found salvation (Kingdom message) and blessings through Israel in fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant, the prophetic scriptures and the Great Commission.

Genesis 12:2-3 - And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: Gen. 12:3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Isaiah 60:1-3 - Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. Isa. 60:2 For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. Isa. 60:3 And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

4. The Dispensation of Grace began with Paul, because the final kingdom offer here in early Acts was rejected by Israel. God then (Mid-Acts) sent salvation by faith alone to the Gentiles, in spite of Israel, through Paul.

Ephesians 2:16 - And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

A.

Gamaliel's Advise and the Council's Decision

Acts 5:33-40 - When they heard *that*, they were cut *to the heart*, and took counsel to slay them. 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; Acts 5:35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. 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. 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. 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: Acts 5:39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God. 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.

1. Gamaliel says [Ye men of Israel]. Again, it is not the Body of Christ.
2. Gamaliel is a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin, respected and an elder in theology of the Law.
 - a. Josephus said of him: "Gamaliel was one of only seven of Rabban, or our master. He wasn't just a rabbi".
 - b. Gamaliel was the grandson of the Jewish man called Hillel the Elder, who founded the most lenient version of the Pharisees. Example: They allowed for divorce for about any reason.

*When Jesus came on the scene, remember He narrowed divorce down to just a few things.

Matthew 19:3-9 - The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? Matt. 19:4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, Matt. 19:5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Matt. 19:6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. Matt. 19:7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? Matt. 19:8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. Matt. 19:9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

*Gamaliel led the Pharisees, was on the Sanhedrin council, and co-chaired with the High Priest. So in verse 34, when he told the council to put the apostles in another room, he was obeyed because of respect and his position!

3. Gamaliel strongly opposed putting the disciples to death and cautioned his colleagues not to act so rashly. Gamaliel then presented his arguments on why they should not kill the apostles.
 - a. He first brought up an historic event they were all familiar with in verse 36. A man named Theudas, who had a high opinion of himself [boasting himself to be somebody], gathered about 400 men and led a rebellion. The only thing he accomplished was his own destruction and the scattering of his men. Theudas' efforts gained nothing, and he hasn't even been considered in history's books. Theudas was a loser!
 - b. In verse 37, there later rose up another man named Judas of Galilee. Judas also led a revolt against an upcoming census to determine how much taxes the people would be obligated to pay. The collection of money would then go to Rome.
 - (1) Judas believed God alone was Israel's rightful King and that no Jew should have to pay taxes to Caesar.
 - (2) Judas encouraged many Jewish people to not pay taxes, and those who did pay - Judas had their houses burned down and stole their cattle.

*Rome crushed this revolt. Judas was taken, executed, and his followers scattered.

Note: Years later the same stance against Rome was taken by a political party known as the Zealots. This led to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

4. In both of Gamaliel's examples, the Romans killed the leaders of the revolt and scattered the followers. The revolt ended and came to be **nothing**.
 - a. Gamaliel thought the **same** thing about Jesus Christ, His apostles and followers. Christ and His teachings were somewhat of a revolt against Rome's control of the land of Israel and its people. Rome, with the Jewish leaders, put Jesus to death and His disciples (at least at **first**) were also scattered. That meant their message would also be silenced.

*So Gamaliel thinks that the same thing could happen with the apostles, if necessary. Then, they and their kingdom message would amount to **nothing**.
 - b. The big difference of course was that Theudas and Judas did not rise from the dead. Whereas, Jesus Christ **did** rise, was **alive**, and the Holy Spirit was empowering the apostles and working through them.
5. Isn't it amazing how Christ takes those who are **opposite** of one another and makes them both believing brethren! Within Jesus' disciples, one was a **zealot** and another was a **tax** collector.

A Sidenote:

 - a. Simon the zealot - he strongly opposed Rome's rule. The zealots were Israel's **patriotic** ones. They wanted Israel's freedom, so they became terrorists and assassins of Rome's military. But this Simon became a believer in **Christ** Messiah!

Luke 6:15 - Matthew and Thomas, James the *son* of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes,
 - b. Matthew the publican (tax collector), was like an **I.R.S.** agent for the Romans!

*So we have one who wanted **free**dom from Rome's tyranny and the other worked **for** Rome. Yet, now they have been **re**conciled together.
6. Based on both of these examples (Theudas-Simon), Gamaliel's advise was to leave the disciples **alone**. His thinking was:
 - a. If their message was merely of men, it would **fail** on its own, so let it take its course. And, if it became a problem, the Romans would **crush** it.
 - b. If this apostles' religious movement was truly of God, you would **never** be able to overthrow it! Gamaliel did not want to be on a side that was against God - because He always **wins**!

*Interestingly, though Gamaliel was **not** a believer in Christ Messiah, he and the council did believe that God intervened and controlled events. I think Gamaliel was trusting that the apostles' message would just **fade away**. And actually it did, not because of the apostles (12) but because of **them** (leadership) and because of Israel's rejection of Christ (Acts 7).

* Also we see that God, to fulfill His purpose, **used** Gamaliel to free the apostles. Just like He moved on the non-believer Pharaoh to free Israel.
7. In verse 40, the Jewish leaders were in a tough spot. If they executed the apostles, there would be an **uproar** from the **common** Jewish people and from those who were listening and believing the apostles' message.

- a. So they welcomed Gamaliel's advice and were in agreement in order to remove themselves from this situation. But before letting them go, they have the apostles beaten. The Law permitted 40 lashes and they usually gave 39, just in case they had miscounted one.
- b. Remember what Jesus had said to His apostles?

Matthew 10:17 - But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;

Mark 10:38-39 - But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? Mark 10:39 And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized:

*This here is the fulfillment of that prophesy for preaching the offering of the kingdom.

- c. Acts 22:3 - I am verily a man *which am* a Jew, born in Tarsus, *a city* in Cilicia, yet brought up in manner Sidenote: this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.

*Could it have been possible that Saul of Tarsus (Paul), a student of Gamaliel, was involved here to help administer the stripes on the apostles? I believe he was at least there.

**It is only conjecture, but interesting. So they are threatened, beaten, and then let go.

B.

The Apostles' Hearts

1. The apostles were becoming a battle-tested group of believers, who counted it a privilege to suffer

Acts 5:41-42 - And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. Acts 5:42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

for Christ. There was no complaining, just praising of God.

*Jesus had said:

Matthew 5:11-12 - Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Matt. 5:12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

2. In verse 42, it shows that the disciples did not abandon their faith of true Judaism, nor their mission to try to win Israel to the Messiah - first beginning at Jerusalem (Acts 1:8). They are still in the temple and many houses proclaiming the alive-again Savior-Messiah.

*Were they very effective?

Acts 6:7 - And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

C. Conclusion:

Interestingly, as the Kingdom is being offered to Israel, the Apostles are fulfilling the promises that Christ had made to them (12).

Examples:

1. Promise - John 14:13-14 - And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. John 14:14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do *it*.
Answer - Acts 3:4-8 - And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. Acts 3:5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Acts 3:6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. Acts 3:7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted *him* up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. Acts 3:8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.
2. Promise - Matthew 18:18-19 - Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Matt. 18:19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.
Answer - Acts 4:29, 31, 33 - And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, Acts 4:31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. Acts 4:33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.
3. Promise - Matthew 16:19 - And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.
Answer - Acts 5:9-10 - 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. 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.
4. Promise - Mark 11:24 - Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*.
Answer - Acts 5:15-16 - 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. 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.

****We see here all of these apostles' prayer promises, given to them by Christ, were literally fulfilled (no mistakes - no misfires - and no blunders). They could bind, loose, say it, pray it, claim it, and it happened!**

*** God had told them also that they would be persecuted and have to suffer for His name. This is also
* fulfilled here in chapter five.**