

THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

SESSION 18: ACTS 5:12-32

ACTS 5:12-20 | APOSTOLIC MIRACLES

- Verses 12 – 14 – Here we are made aware of the following:
 - To this point, only the Apostles are working **signs and wonders**.
 - The group is still in harmony with Jewish law, and was meeting at **Solomon's porch**.
 - There was an explosion of growth in the number of **believers** (having believed in Peter's message, thus they repented, were baptized, and were joining in a common life with other believers).
- Verses 15-16 –
 - The victories of this apostolic assembly are beyond compare in anything in the church today, and even beyond compare to anything in world history. **Every one** that was brought for healing experienced it.
 - The church has not had a single day in its history of such miracles and victories. In the apostolic assembly, it was almost so common that only two verses are given to describe it.
- Verses 17-20 –
 - While the **people magnified them** (v. 13), the leadership of the nation did not.
 - The **high priest** along with the Sanhedrin needed to decide on behalf of the nation.
 - Even though the high priest was a politically appointed position, it is a situation in which the Jewish nation had given (or acquiesced) leadership to the "wrong party," and now this wrong party was the only group that could make a national religious decision.
 - Incidentally, the Greek word **sect** is αἵρεσις [haireisis] from which we get *heresy* (however, the English meaning should not be read back into the interpretation, for the same word is used in Acts 24:5 to speak of **the sect of the Nazarenes**).
 - The opening of **prison doors** is something that only took place in this apostolic era.
 - Having opened the door, the angel told them to **speak in the temple** (thus was not authorizing them to depart from Jerusalem or Judaism) and they were to speak **the words of this life**.
 - Not just "the words of life," but an emphasis on **this life**.
 - At this point in the book of Acts there has been no emphasis or mention on the *afterlife*, only on **this life**, and how the nation could receive its covenant blessings (which are earthly, for the most part) in their generation.

ACTS 5:21-42 | TEMPLE OPPOSITION

- Verses 21-23 –
 - In verse 18 it is **the apostles** that were put into the **common prison**. Now all of these 12 apostles were obedient to the Lord and **entered into the temple...and taught** (v. 21), unbeknownst to the high priest.
 - When the **high priest** came together with the **council** συνέδριον [sunedrion] and the **senate** γερουσία [gerousia] (only used here, a reference to "elders") they sent the **officers** who found the prison **shut with all safety**, including **keepers standing...before the doors**, but did not find the apostles.
 - The officials **found no man within** the prison. It is unclear whether the angel let all the prisoners go or if the apostles were the only prisoners in the prison at the time.
 - Another uncertainty is how the angels managed to allow the apostles to pass unseen.
- Verses 24-26 –
 - The Temple officials were perplexed about the entire situation.

- Discovering the apostles **standing in the temple** they had them arrested again, but **feared the people**, another clear indication that the mass of the Jewish people was accepting the message of the apostles, while their leaders were not.
- Verses 27-28 –
 - The high priest understood the **doctrine** of the apostles, and that the apostles did indeed **intend to bring this man's blood upon** the nation.
 - Fundamental to an understanding of the book of Acts is that, to this point, the death of Jesus Christ has not once been presented as *good news*. Rather, it is a *sin* committed in *ignorance* and the only appropriate response was to *repent*.
 - Only later (with the Apostle Paul) would the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ be presented as good news over which to rejoice.
 - See 1 Tim. 2:6, and notice that the **ransom for all** was only **to be testified in due time**.
 - Why not immediately?
 - Under the Gospel of the Circumcision (presented by Peter) the death of Jesus Christ was *bad news*.
 - Under the Gospel of the Uncircumcision (Paul) it became the good news of a **ransom**.
- Verse 29 –
 - This simple and fundamental principle would save us from endless deliberation on decisions, untold heartache from bad decisions, and from never-ending people pleasing expeditions.
- Verse 30 –
 - The high priest was justifiably concerned that Peter **intend[ed] to bring this man's blood upon us** (v. 28), for that is exactly what Peter does in this verse, moments after the high priest speaks.
 - Once again, note that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is *bad news* not *good news*.
- Verse 31 –
 - **God exalted Jesus with his right hand** (grammar allows **with** or *at* or *to*). Jesus was exalted **to be a Prince and a Saviour**.
 - The word **Prince** is a *leadership* word (i.e.: a *monarch*).
 - The Gospel which we preach focuses on the **Saviour** aspect of Christ's work, but His exaltation is equally about His future worldwide leadership.
 - In Peter's day, **Prince** was the primary role, since Peter was preaching a Kingdom Gospel.
 - Christ was **exalted** in order **to give repentance to Israel**, and also **forgiveness of sins**. That is, the exaltation of Christ should have brought a *change of thinking* to the Jewish people.
- Verse 32 –
 - Not only were the apostles **his witnesses** but **also the Holy Ghost**. This is a key point of theology, because if the nation rejects this witness it will have *blasphemed the Holy Ghost* and thus have committed the *unforgivable sin* (Matt. 12:31-32).
 - Note that the **Holy Ghost** was given **to them that obey** because obedience was required in the Kingdom-era message.