

OBEYING GOD AND NOT MAN, FULFILS THE PROMISE (Ch1:8)!
ACTS CH5:17-33

RE-CAP!

The Church in Jerusalem was initially:

- 120 people - **Ch1:15**
- then 3120 people - **Ch2:41**
- then 3120+ people - **Ch2:47**
- then 5000 men probably anything from 5000 - 10,000 people – **Ch4:4**
- then people becoming Christians daily, in an unprecedented way – **Ch5:14!**
15,000+ perhaps!

Peter has preached on four occasions up to this point:

1. Ch1:15-26
2. Ch2:14-36
3. Ch3:12-26
4. Ch4:8-12

(There will be 8 sermons by Peter - Ch1:15-22; 2:14-41; 3:6-26; 4:8-22; 5:29-42; 10:34-48; 11:4-18; + 15:7-11)

The apostles are filled and continue to speak boldly! Ch4:31

ILLUSTRATION

What is meant to happen at Court? If you plead not guilty the prosecution lawyer states why they think you committed the crime. They present evidence – which may include calling witnesses to the crime. The prosecution must prove the following before you can be found guilty: 1. That you did something illegal, that you meant it, and that you committed the offence intentionally or recklessly. 2. That you knew what you did was wrong, or that you knew you were doing it. 3. You defend your case either you or your solicitor challenges what the prosecution says and you can give your own evidence on oath (when you must ‘swear’ to tell the truth). 4. The court makes its decision. 5. The magistrates (or judge/jury) will decide whether you’re guilty or not guilty of the crime. If you’re found not guilty, you are ‘acquitted’, and free to leave. If you’re found guilty, you will be sentenced by the Court.

This is what is about to happen in Acts to the apostles!

Pause for thought?

- *Why are the Sadducees jealous? V17*
- *Why public prison? V18*
- *What does the angel mean by “this life?” V20*
- *What does it mean by “the Captain of the Temple and the chief priests heard these words (referring to v23), they were greatly perplexed”? V24*
- *Upon being presented the apostles, why isn't the apostles manner of their great escape mentioned? V27-33*

- *Why won't the high priest mention Jesus' name? V28*
- *What 4 great truths does Peter present?*
- V30 - God raised Jesus
- V31 - God exalted Jesus
- V31 - God offers repentance and forgiveness
- V32 - God gave the Holy Spirit to those who obey

JEALOUSY AND THE ARREST! V17-18

If I had to pick one sentence out of the book of Acts that would state the theme of the Book, I think it would be Acts Ch1:8. Just before Jesus returns to heaven to take His place at the right hand of God, He gives the disciples this Word that echoes through the whole book of Acts, ***"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."***

As we move through the Book of Acts in these sermons, what we are seeing is the fulfilment of this promise. The Holy Spirit comes upon the disciples again and again with unusual fullness, the result is supernatural power leading to courageous, life-giving witness. Spirit . . . power . . . witness . . . new life - that's what we see unfolding in the history of the early church!

According to John Piper ***"And the power is not merely the quiet power of preaching that looks natural, but really is supernatural (and we thank God for that!). Again and again, the power that comes with the witness, and helps make it life-changing, is something extraordinary, something manifestly supernatural - tongues of fire, sound of wind (Ch2:2-3), shaking building (Ch4:31). Or, as we saw in last weeks sermon, remarkable healing and deliverance, in Acts Ch5:16. The effect of this demonstration of power is described in verse 14, "And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." This is the playing out of Acts Ch1:8. The Spirit comes upon the Church in an unusual way; extraordinary power is manifested; and life-giving testimony brings people into the kingdom."***

You can see the reason the Sadducees are so worked up about the power of the Christians by looking at Acts Ch4:1-2. The Sadducees denied the resurrection of the dead (***Acts 23:6-8***). ***So when the Christians not only taught it, but did signs and wonders to back it up (Acts Ch5:12), you can imagine the opposition!*** Pure jealousy, their ministry was powerless and the ministry of the apostles through the Holy Spirit was POWERFUL!

JAIL BREAK AND THE ANGEL! V19 -21a

Luke wishes for Theophilus and his wider readers, to be clear that the apostles were released through "divine intervention" (Ch12:6-11- Peter + Ch16:26-30 – Paul) The disciples are not just eye-witnesses, but mouth witnesses needing to take their stand! In the apostles case "the stand" was to be made at the very centre of Jewish national and religious life, The Temple! ***The apostles are instructed by the angel to go and stand in the Temple – to hold their ground, stand firm, a dogged steadfastness to the Gospel was required in face of stern persecution!***

Human attempts to prevent the Mission of God were divinely frustrated!

The actions of the apostles reveals their unswerving faith in God and not in man! John Stott states "To be sure, Christians are called to be conscientious citizens and generally speaking, to submit to human authorities (Rom Ch13:1; Titus Ch3:1; 1st Peter Ch2:13). ***But if the authority concerned misuses its God-given power to command what He forbids or forbid what He commands, then the Christian's duty is to disobey the human authority in order to obey God's***" (John Stott, The Message of Acts, pg116).

JESUS AND THE ARRAIGNMENT! V21b-33

Meanwhile, the Sanhedrin has been assembled, and they are awaiting the arrival of the arrested apostles! They are not there despite the Prison being on "lock down", and the guards on duty v23! They (that is the Sanhedrin) are told that the men that they are looking for are teaching in the Temple v25! We are told that the Captain of the Temple and his men escorted, without force, the apostles to the assembled gathering of the religious leaders. What is really interesting is when questioned, how they were released is not questioned!

They are brought to an arraignment! Arraignment - to bring (a defendant) before a judge or magistrate to hear the charges and to plead usually either guilty or not guilty. Where they are accused by the High Priest of contempt of Court on two accounts:

1. Continuing to teach and preach the name of Jesus Ch4:18+21 (although they dare not mention His name!)
2. That the apostles are blaming the Jews for His murder!

Peter's response is incredible! He presents four facts to the arraignment:

1. V30 - God raised Jesus
2. V31 - God exalted Jesus
3. V31 - God offers repentance and forgiveness
4. V32 - God gave the Holy Spirit to those who obey

The Apostles made it clear that the murder of Jesus was the responsibility of the Jews Ch2:23; 3:13-15, 17-18; 4:10 and here! The word "tree" is rooted back to Deuteronomy Ch21:22-23! That a person who commits a certain crime and who is hanged on a tree is cursed!

APPLICATION

What does Luke want to show?

- That the apostles were publicly disgraced, suffered and yet were divinely protected!
- The Christian faith is the fulfilment of Judaism v30!