

NOT LIKE ANY OTHER CAUSE IN HISTORY!
ACTS CH5:34-42

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 five occasions up to this point:

1. Ch1:15-26
2. Ch2:14-36
3. Ch3:12-26
4. Ch4:8-12
5. Ch5:29-42

(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

Pantomime – 1. informally “panto”. 2. is a type of musical comedy stage production designed for family entertainment. It was developed in England and is performed throughout the United Kingdom, Ireland and (to a lesser extent) in other English-speaking countries, especially during the Christmas and the New Year season. Modern pantomime includes songs, gags, slapstick comedy and dancing.

Pantomime has a long theatrical history in Western culture dating back to the era of classical theatre. It developed partly from the 16th century “commedia dell’arte” tradition of Italy and other European and British stage traditions, such as 17th-century *marques* and music halls.

The Sanhedrin, made up of both Sadducees and Pharisees, are the “pantomime baddies”, the apostles (Christians) the “good guys” and Jesus is the “King”, that the story evolves around!

THE COUNCIL! V34-39a

According to Marshall “But at this point there was a somewhat surprising intervention. In the Gospels the Pharisees appear fairly consistently as the **opponents** of Jesus (Luke Ch5:21, 30; Ch7:30; Ch11:53; Ch15:2; Ch16:14), and Jesus himself certainly **criticized** strongly their religious behaviour which he regarded as **hypocritical** (Luke Ch11:39-52; Ch12:1; Ch16:15; Ch18:9-14). The Pharisees, as represented by the scribes, also formed part of the Sanhedrin which condemned Jesus to **death** (Luke Ch22:2; Matt Ch27:62). Nevertheless, there are signs of a more favourable attitude to Jesus on the part of some of

the Pharisees in Luke (Luke Ch7:36; Ch11:37; Ch14:1). In none of the Gospels are they directly named in connection with the condemnation of Jesus, and in Acts we find some Pharisees who became Christians (Acts Ch15:5; Ch23:6); Paul claims that in belief the Pharisees stand closer to the Christians than do the Sadducees (Acts Ch23:6-9), and some of the scribes side with him against the Sadducees who are represented as the real opponents of the Christians (Acts Ch23:9). It is, therefore, perhaps not so strange that a leading Pharisee rose to warn against adopting extreme measures with the Christians" (Cited in I. Howard, Marshall. Acts – pg121).

It is worth noting that just as in Acts Ch4:15-17, we need to think about how Luke had access to reports of what is considered in the Sanhedrin behind closed doors! However Luke was made aware of the discussion, Gamaliel, an honoured teacher of the law (**Paul was one of his students Acts Ch22:3**), is was making a plea for restraint and caution and uses two examples in Jewish history where movements were started, gathered momentum, their leaders were killed, the followers soon lost motivation and the movements soon died out!

V34 - The wrong type of honour! Gamaliel was suggesting that with Jesus (The LEADER) now dead, the followers would soon lose motivation and the movement would die out! How wrong he was! Gamaliel did call for an examination of the truthfulness of the apostles claims! V39 – Opposing God! Gamaliel warns the Jewish Council about the possibility of opposing God!

THE CONCLUSION! V39b-40

So because Gamaliel is honoured among the Council, and because of the two historical stories, along with the warning that if this movement is from God, then it cannot be overthrown, the Council agree to take his advice!

However, they also conclude to have the apostles beaten, the beating would have been the "forty lashes minus one" and to further prohibit them from speaking in the name of Jesus! They then let them go.

THE CHRISTIANS! V41-42

1. V40 Charged - The beating would have been the "forty lashes minus one!"
2. V41 Counted worthy – The Christians are rejoicing (Ch4:24). Remember Christ's Words to His followers in Matt Ch5:10-13? Rejoice!
3. V42 Cease – When we suffer for Christ, it denies "self", witnesses to a dying world and reveals to Satan that "beating us" only makes us stronger!

V41 – The right type of honour! John Stott says "the honour to be dishonoured!" John Stott records for us "Luke has now concluded his account of the two waves of persecution which broke over the infant Church. In the first the Council issued a prohibition and a warning, which led the apostles to pray to the Sovereign Lord for boldness to go on preaching; in the second they received a prohibition and a beating, which led them to praise God for the honour of suffering for Christ" (Cited in John Stott, Commentary on Acts, pg 119).

APPLICATION

Persecution will refine the Church, but not destroy it!

Rejoicing in suffering – Rom Ch5:3; 2 Cor Ch6:10; 1st Peter Ch4:13 – We must go through many hardships before entering the Kingdom – Acts Ch14:22!