

**"Satan's Persistence"**

**Part 3**

**Acts 5:12-42**

**Introduction:** When we ended our study of Acts last week, we left the apostles standing before the Sanhedrin as the rulers tried their best to intimidate them. This was another attempt by Satan to use fear to get them to stop preaching in the name of Jesus Christ. As our title says, Satan can be very persistent in his attacks.

**Application:**

In our study we have walked with the apostles and watched as they were threatened, arrested, jailed and belittled. It has been one trial after another for them and we are just getting started on our journey through Acts. The lesson in all of this for us is that we must NEVER drop our spiritual guard. Just because we are victorious today does not mean there will not be another trial tomorrow. Sometimes the trials come upon us one right after another. Therefore, let us be always on the alert.

**1 Peter 5:8-9**

<sup>8</sup> *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:*

<sup>9</sup> *Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.*

**1 Thessalonians 5:6-8**

<sup>6</sup> *Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.*

<sup>7</sup> *For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.*

<sup>8</sup> *But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.*

Now let us get to where we stopped last week.

**I. God's Protection**

**Notice Acts 5:28-32**

Peter and the other apostles refused to be intimidated and silenced by the Sanhedrin. They had been commissioned by God and they knew they were to follow His will and His will was to preach the Gospel to all men. In the verses that we read Peter was not being arrogant with his answer, but he was just stating the Truth. He had an opportunity to in front of him to share the Gospel and he did just that. To others the objective here would have been to just get our alive. Do whatever was required by the Sanhedrin and hope for escape. But Peter and the other apostles knew that if they died serving the Lord, God had a far better life waiting for them the moment they closed their eyes in death. They also knew that God expected faithfulness even to the point of death.

### Revelation 2:8-10

<sup>8</sup> *And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;*

<sup>9</sup> *I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.*

<sup>10</sup> *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: **be thou faithful unto death**, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

### Notice Acts 5:33

The rulers were "cut to the heart." Let us notice what the phrase "cut to the heart" means:

***"to be sawn through mentally, i.e. to be rent with vexation"***

This is what True Biblical preaching does to the sinner.

### Hebrews 4:12

<sup>12</sup> *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

The Sanhedrin were accustomed to being able to intimidate those whom they opposed, but it did not work on the apostles. This infuriated the rulers and now they would resort to execution. Notice the words of Boice.

*"Since they were unable to contend with the disciples on the level of truth, they resorted to naked authority and force. First, threats. Second, a beating. Ultimately, death."*

As we exit out of verse 33 let us understand that the apostles are now facing certain death. The Sanhedrin are seeking counsel to slay them because they are convicted, and they have not been able to silence the apostles.

Notice Acts 5:34-39

There is much to see in these verses. That day there just happened to be a man who was well respected in the meeting of the Sanhedrin, and he stood up and spoke words that would be used to preserve the lives of the apostles. God worked through this unsaved man at this time to stop the execution of the apostles.

**Application:**

What an encouragement this is for us in our lives. God can use whomever He desires to accomplish His will and His purpose for us. God often has people in our lives at just the right time, at just the right place, and with just the right connections to meet the needs at that very moment.

In 1 Samuel 30 David had returned from battle and found that the Amalekites had destroyed his city Ziklag, and they took the women and the children captive. David pursued them and God placed a young man in the path that would prove to be very helpful.

**1 Samuel 30:10-15, 18-19**

*<sup>10</sup> But David pursued, he and four hundred men: for two hundred abode behind, which were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor.*

*<sup>11</sup> And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water;*

*<sup>12</sup> And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins: and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him: for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, three days and three nights.*

*<sup>13</sup> And David said unto him, To whom belongest thou? and whence art thou? And he said, I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick.*

*<sup>14</sup> We made an invasion upon the south of the Cherethites, and upon the coast which belongeth to Judah, and upon the south of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire.*

*15 And David said to him, Canst thou bring me down to this company? And he said, Swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this company.*

*18 And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: and David rescued his two wives.*

*19 And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any thing that they had taken to them: David recovered all.*

This was not a coincidence, but it was God's hand that placed this man in the field to help David to find the Amalekites. God does the same for us today just as He did for the apostles. There will be someone show up at just the right time to assist us when there is a need or to point us in the right direction. These meetings are by Divine appointment. But we must be careful because Satan will also place people in our lives to lead us in the wrong direction. How can we discern when the person is sent by the Lord or sent by Satan? The person God sends will advise you to follow the Word of God. Anyone who advises you to go against the Word of God is not someone who has been sent by God.

Getting back to Acts, Gamaliel's theology was flawed in the advice he gave to the Sanhedrin.

**Notice Acts 5:36-39 again.**

Gamaliel pointed to two situations in the past that eventually came to nothing. But Gamaliel was not taking into consideration that while Theudas and Judas who led the previous movements died and remained dead, Jesus Christ who was the Leader of the apostles, died and rose from the grave. Jesus was alive. Notice the words of Whitcomb on Gamaliel's reasoning:

*"In both of Gamaliel's examples, the Romans killed the leader of the revolt, and the disciples scattered, and the movement came to nothing. Gamaliel thought the same thing about Jesus Christ. Jesus was considered by some to have been in revolt against the Roman government, Rome put him to death, and his disciples will eventually be scattered, and Christianity will die."*

What Gamaliel said about the test of time was also flawed. He said if it were of man it would come to nothing. We know this is incorrect because we can see the Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses and the followers of Islam today and we know they are not of God, but they have turned into major religions, and they have many followers.

**Notice Acts 5:38-39 again.**

Gamaliel was viewed as a very wise man. But when we look at what is recorded here, we see that he truly lacked spiritual discernment because he was unsaved. As far as we know he may have met Jesus and if not, he was completely aware of who Jesus claimed to be. He had heard about the resurrection, and He would have known of Jesus miracles and then he was fully aware of the miracles which God did through the apostles. Let me remind you of the response of the Sanhedrin earlier when they brought Peter and John into their meeting.

**Acts 4:13**

*<sup>13</sup> Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.*

These were all things that Gamaliel was aware of. Then consider the words he spoke to the Sanhedrin, "IF it be of God." How could he ever question if this were of God? He had all the evidence before him that Jesus was the Son of God as He claimed to be. We do not know exactly why Gamaliel refused to see Jesus as the Truth, but I can guess that it was a pride thing. For this man who was so respected in his day to admit that Jesus was the Messiah would be to admit that he was wrong, and his theology was wrong.

**Application:**

Pride has assisted many people in going to hell because they refused to admit they needed a Savior. There are many people in hell who sat in church and heard the Gospel and were under conviction as the Sanhedrin were, but they were too proud to admit they were not saved and that they needed a Savior. Sometimes it is a situation where a person is a member of the church, holds an office, and is well respected in the church. Once he or she reaches that level their pride will hinder them from admitting that they were never saved in all their years of service and membership. I can assure you that there are many in this situation today and some probably come here.

Let me just say that it is far better to swallow that pride now and come to Jesus Christ than to carry that pride and die in your sins. No one will condemn you if you admit your not saved. They will actually rejoice with you in your salvation and the burden of sin will be lifted from your shoulders. Let us be reminded of the reality of hell with what the rich man in Luke 16 experienced.

**Luke 16:23-28**

*<sup>23</sup> And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.*

*<sup>24</sup> And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.*

*<sup>25</sup> But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.*

*<sup>26</sup> And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.*

*<sup>27</sup> Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:*

*<sup>28</sup> For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.*

#### **Notice Acts 5:40-42**

The apostles were beaten and they probably each received 39 lashes. Notice the words of Marshall on this beating:

*"Beaten can also be translated skinned; the beating they received stripped the skin off of their backs. "It was no soft option; people were known to die from it, even if this was exceptional. It was meant to be a serious lesson to offenders."*

#### **Conclusion:**

These men after they were beaten went right back to doing what they were commissioned to do. They actually rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for Jesus. This challenges each of us as followers of Jesus. They continued where we may have stopped. We often find the threat of social rejection enough to make us keep quiet about who Jesus is and what He did for us. We need to have the apostles' boldness and determination to stand firm for Jesus Christ.