

Acts 5.17-42

Hail Prince and Savior!

Today BEGIN Remembrance MOST IMPORTANT Week in HUMAN HISTORY  
ETERNAL DESTINY of EVERY HUMAN Being determined by Week's Events

Remember – MAKER became MAN - SOVEREIGN became SERVANT

TODAY Palm Sunday – Jesus enters Ground Zero > City of Jerusalem

This Week in Life of ZGC > CONTINUE JOURNEY THRU Book of Acts  
Path of HIS Followers in Jerusalem > Charts Very Close to their RISEN MASTER

Jesus ENTRANCE into Jerusalem RECORDED in all 4 Gospels

Luke's PALM SUNDAY Story > Both SHOUTS of Crowd & SORROW of Christ  
SOVEREIGN Gaze of Lord Jesus extends to EVENTS Recorded in Acts 5

When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out." As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes...because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you." Luke 19.37-44

CROWDS in Jerusalem Easily SWAYED > FICKLE Human Heart little Changed  
Called MESSIAH on PALM SUNDAY > Cried for MURDER on GOOD FRIDAY  
Up to Acts 5 PEOPLE Generally POSITIVE about FOLLOWERS of JESUS  
NOW Tide of Opinion begins to CHANGE/ Soon 1<sup>st</sup> MARTYR join RISEN LORD

GROWTH of Church > EMPOWERED in Worship / ENGAGED w/ WORLD

BALANCE – Church SENT into WORLD – STRENGTHENED by WORSHIP

No WORSHIP: Become SELF-CENTERED // No WITNESS: SELF-ABSORBED

## 1. The Folly of Opposing God

a. Fight for Followers Growth of Early Church > Shrank Ranks of Jews

v. 17 Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were *filled with jealousy*.

WHY these SOPHISTICATED Leaders Jealous of RAG-TAG GALILEANS?

COUNCIL > Well Educated, Properly Ordained, Government Approved

When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. Acts 4.13

MAGNETIC ATTRACTION of Jesus – More POWERFUL than Yoke of Law

DAY of PENTECOST -

...about three thousand were added to their number that day Acts 2.41

many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand Acts 4.4

more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number Acts 5.14

A leader with no followers is just a man taking a walk. E.V. Hill

INTENSE EFFORTS did NOT SLOW Increase of Church > NEXT Chapter...

The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith. Acts 6.7

If we study church history...those most hostile to the purity of the gospel have been the clergy...Most of the guns aimed against the Scriptures in our day do not come from secularists, who could care less. They come from unbelieving seminary professors and ministers who simply will not identify with the truth of the gospel. R.C. Sproul

b. Force > Religious Leaders attacked with POLITICAL & POLICE Power  
 COULD NOT REFUTE the TRUTH and POWER of Apostle's MESSAGE  
 Responded with FORCE > 1<sup>st</sup> THREATS, 2<sup>nd</sup> BEATINGS, 3<sup>rd</sup> DEATH  
 NAKED POWER is ONLY WEAPON of WORLD

v. 18 They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail.

When they MYSTERIOUSLY GOT OUT of PRISON....

v. 40 They called the apostles in and had them flogged.

They were jealous of Jesus because it was his name, rather than theirs, that was proclaimed. They were also jealous of the apostles because they were preaching powerfully and doing miracles so people were following them. James Boice

### c. Faulty Facts

The Sadducees say that there is *no resurrection*, and that there are *neither angels nor spirits*...  
 Acts 23.8

**Thus >> God is Weak Today \ God is Worthless on the Final Day**

**IS God is Weak Today? > ANGELS God's Servants to HELP His Children**

v. 19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out.

Word ANGEL occurs 21 times in Acts > SUPPORT God's SERVANTS

**IS God is Worthless on Final Day? NO RESURRECTION > Gospel is HOAX**

d. Finesse > Gamaliel, Pharisee, Member of Minority Party in Sanhedrin

v. 34 a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people

GAMILIEL – MOST RESPECTED Rabbi of his GENERATION

MENTOR of SAUL of Tarsus / Praised for WISDOM, RESTRAINT, PATIENCE

TODAY > NOBEL Peace Prize > Secretary-General of UNITED NATIONS

True > MORE REASONABLE than ENRAGED SADDUCEES > NOT SEE...

1) Obvious NO MENTION of CLEAR TRUTH These Guys are UNUSUAL

Story began Ch 3 – 1st INTERROGATION after HEALING of LAME MAN...  
 ...they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them...They  
 asked. *"Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding  
 miracle, and we cannot deny it."* Acts 4.7,17

vs. 27,28 Having brought the apostles, they made them appear before the Sanhedrin  
 to be questioned by the high priest. "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this  
 name. Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching..."

Something MISSING!! NEVER ASKED *'Hey, how did you guys GET OUT?!'*

To ASK QUESTION > ADMISSION that their God is TRUE, POWERFUL

Gamaliel seems SOPHISTICATED, OBJECTIVE > But is PRETTY STUPID

POWER of JESUS is AS OBVIOUS as NOSE on his FACE > BLIND to It!

2) Once for All > Espouses CYCLICAL View of History *'Here we go AGAIN!'*

vs. 36,37 Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about  
 four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed,  
 and it all came to nothing. After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the  
 census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers  
 were scattered.

BEEN THERE, DONE THAT, NOW HERE'S Another CLAIM to POWER!

GOD of ISRAEL > Definitive Historical ACTS to SAVE His People

- Afflicted EGYPTIANS with PLAGUES and DEATH
- Opened the RED SEA > DROWN Persecutors / DELIVER His People
- Met MOSES on Mt. SINAI > Made COVENANT, Gave LAW

GOD'S COMING in Christ > ONCE FOR ALL Salvation for CHURCH

- VIRGIN Conceives gives BIRTH to SON > Fully Man, Fully God
- DIES on CROSS as SUBSTITUTE for HIS PEOPLE, REDEEMER
- 3 Days Later > ALIVE, RISEN in GLORY, RESURRECTION Body
- 40 Days Later > ASCENDS to Heaven > Enthroned, EXALTED

Gamaliel's CLAIM > OTHER Guys DEAD and GONE > NEVER Returned

JESUS was KILLED > But HE SURE SEEMS TO BE VERY MUCH ALIVE!

3) Opportunity > Private Audience w/ APOSTLES of Jesus > Hear Them!

v. 31 God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.

Temple & Priesthood SUPPOSED to Provide WAY of Repentance & Forgiveness

PETER BLUNTLY & BOLDLY declares FOUND Now in God's Prince & Savior

All that had been represented by the temple has now reached its final purpose and fulfillment in Christ. Clinton Arnold

LOST Opportunity > Turned Discussion from Jesus to 2 Dead Insurrectionists

WORLD Commend > CAUTION, BALANCE, OBJECTIVITY, IMPARTIAL

**“Just, wait a minute here! Be reasonable, think it over, give it some time!”**

INACTION > Allows EVIL to REIGN UNCHECKED Do its DAMAGE

Sometimes in SHORT RUN > EVIL SUCCEEDS > The GOOD Die Young

NEUTRALITY about Jesus is NOT AN OPTION > FOR or AGAINST Him

Jesus: "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters."  
Luke 11.23

GAMALIEL calls it CAUTION > GOD calls it COWARDICE

GAMALIEL thought he was DELIBERATING > GOD sees his DENIAL

SITTING ON THE FENCE is NOT Safe Place > Salvation CLEAR DECISION

e. Final Fears > Sanhedrin tries BAILING Water OUT of a SINKING SHIP!

Several MONTHS BEFORE > Utter DISREGARD of NATION and SELVES

The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd...to have Jesus executed...  
 "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the  
 louder, "Crucify him!"...Pilate said, "I am innocent of this man's blood. It is your  
 responsibility!" All the people answered, "*Let his blood be on us and on our  
 children!*"  
 Matthew 27.20-25

NOW Numbers DECREASING > Some of OWN LEADERS are DEFECTING

v. 17 The high priest and all his associates...were *filled with jealousy*.

It is amazing how much envy can be hidden under the disguise of 'defending the  
 faith'.  
 Warren Wiersbe

Then ANGELS (Which DON'T EXIST) Opened Prison to Release these

IGNORANT PREACHERS of RESURRECTION (That NEVER HAPPENED)

v. 24 On hearing this report, the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests  
 were puzzled, wondering what would come of this.

With No Regard for PERSONAL SAFETY > LIBERATED FOOLS dare to

PREACH Banned MESSAGE in High Priest's TEMPLE

vs. 25 Then someone came and said, "Look! The men you put in jail are standing in  
 the temple courts teaching the people." At that, the captain went with his officers  
 and brought the apostles. They did not use force, because they feared that the  
 people would stone them.

SANHEDRIN > RULERS of the PEOPLE, Now are in FEAR of the PEOPLE

PETER'S PROVOCATIVE Message to COUNCIL of ELDERS...

v. 32 We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has  
 given to those who obey him.

**IF You had HOLY SPIRIT > You'd UNDERSTAND TRUTH in JESUS**

**DEAD COUNCIL > Defending OLD, PASSING TRADITIONS**

**DYNAMIC CHURCH > Declaring NEW, LIVING TRUTH**

v. 33 When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death.

v. 28 High Priest: "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name. Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are *determined to make us guilty of this man's blood.*"

DARE NOT Speak His NAME 'this man's blood' > MAN they FEARED  
 Few Years Later > TEMPLE was TORN DOWN, RELIGION made RELIC  
 ONLY JESUS Saves > STUBBORN Jews & SINFUL Gentiles > NEED HIM  
**Either GUILTY of Blood of Christ OR you'll find GRACE from His BLOOD**

## 2. The Freedom of Obeying God

a. Trust > APOSTLES should be STRESSED (Not Rulers) but they're CALM

NIGHT BEFORE CROSS > Jesus told 11 Faithful Apostles....

They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. I have told you this, so that *when the time comes you will remember that I warned you.* John 16.2-4

NOW CHURCH is INCREASING >> BUT CONFLICT is INTENSIFYING

ANGEL APPEARS in PRISON CELL >> Is this A DREAM??!!

COMMAND of Angel > DIRECT CONFLICT w/ COMMAND of Authorities

They called them in again and *commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.* Acts 4.19

v. 20 "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people the full message of this new life."

TRUST > Not IN OUTCOME > But in GOD WHO HOLDS the OUTCOME  
 WE CAN READ 'the Rest of the Story' > They WAITED, UNCERTAINTY

## **HUNDREDS Yrs Before > 3 FAITHFUL Servants of GOD in BABYLON**

King Nebuchadnezzar: "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up?...if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then *what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?*" Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, *the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not*, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods..."

Daniel 3.14-18

KNOW God's POWER, DON'T KNOW God's PLAN > Our Good, His Glory

KNOW Going to BE WITH HIM > Peaceful Sleep or Painful Suffering??

NOT MASOCHISTS > God WITH Them > PROMISES are TRUSTWORTHY

vs. 41 The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.

b. Truth > SUBJECTIVE FEELINGS based on OBJECTIVE FACTS

Christians NOT Only Ones Claim to KNOW God > Acts of Sacrifice, Devotion

SANHEDRIN Equally PASSIONATE > HELD Truth of God, RIGHTEOUS

1) Redeemer > Apostles DO NOT DEFEND Selves > DECLARE Savior

Purchase v. 30 Jesus...whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree

Position v. 31 God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior

Pardon v. 31 that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.

Proof v. 30 The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead

v. 32 We are witnesses of these things

Power v. 32 the Holy Spirit, whom God has given

Purity v. 32 those who obey him

## 2) No Rivalry > No One or Nothing else can claim our Ultimate Allegiance

It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed... Salvation is found in *no one else, for there is no other name* Acts 4.10,12

If Peter NOT so PIG-HEADED > They'd be Safely Sleeping in OWN BEDS

But He LEARNED the PAINFUL CONSEQUENCES of DENYING Jesus

FIRMLY, but TACTFULLY Stated UNWAVERING ALLEGIANCE to Jesus

They called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God..." Acts 4.18-20

SOME Time in PRISON made them LESS TACTFUL...

v. 29 Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men!"

Whenever you see persecution, there is more than a probability that truth is on the persecuted side.

Hugh Latimer

English Protestant Pastor, burned at the Stake, 1555

LEGITIMATE Christian CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE...

NOT SELFISH for GAIN or MORE COMFORT or LAWLESSNESS

ALL APOSTLES > v. 18 They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail.

ABSOLUTE BAN of ONLY CHURCH > v. 28 "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name"

Moses before Pharaoh, Elijah before Ahab and Jezebel, John the Baptist before Herod, Paul before Festus – and Ambrose before Theodosius, Theodore of Studios before Constantine VI, Luther before Charles V, and Martin Luther King before the power structure of White America – all were expressing this obligation to appeal from the abuse of political power by human authorities to the ultimate sovereignty of God.

Jaroslav Pelikan

c. Teaching > PRIMARY Task of Church > Make this MESSAGE KNOWN  
 ANGELS > Not make LIFE EASIER – Find Parking Spot – Curb Appetites  
 WANT Angelic Deliverance?? > DANGEROUS > MORE Safe IN PRISON!

v. 20 "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people the full message of this new life."

**God DELIVERS and the SENDS them BACK into DANGER**

Message so BIG and TRANSFORMING > NOT SURE what to CALL IT YET!

BUT are SURE that WHOLE CITY Needs to HEAR this FULL MESSAGE!

Many people who escape persecution keep their mouths closed afterwards, as if they had no further obligation to God...But the Lord sets his people free not so they can abandon the course they started, but rather so they can be more keen in the future.

John Calvin

HOW to Teach FULL Message of NEW LIFE??

Like you EAT an ELEPHANT - ONE BITE AT A TIME!

Jesus: "Go and *make disciples* of all nations, baptizing them...*teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*"

Matthew 28.19-20

v. 21 At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people.

BITE by BITE – LINE by LINE – they TAUGHT the People God's Word

v. 25 "Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people."

**APOSTLES > Both CONSISTENT Lives AND a CLEAR MESSAGE**

v. 28 "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching

High Priest > CONFESS Powerlessness of MAN to STOP GOD!

They LIQUIDATED Jesus – LOCKED UP Apostles >> ALL IN VAIN!

Jerusalem was FILLED with TEACHING > CITIZENS coming to CHRIST

We reject the false doctrine, as though the state, over and beyond its special commission, should and could become the single and totalitarian order of human life, thus fulfilling the church's vocation as well.

Barmen Declaration of the German Evangelical Church, 1934

APOSTLES refused to ALLOW the STATE to STEAL its God-given MISSION

v. 42 Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.

YOU THINK THIS SERMON IS LONG!! They NEVER STOPPED!!

DAY AFTER DAY > How Many days has it been since you TOLD SOMEONE about Jesus? Yesterday? Day Before? Last Week? Last Year?

Are we MORE AFRAID OF PEOPLE than FOR PEOPLE?

Christianity is a religion with a message, a message so important that it simply must be shared to all who live on earth. Ajith Fernando

d. Transforming Picture of FEARLESS, Transformed Disciples

v. 40 They called the apostles in and had them flogged. > lit. SKIN FLAYED

JEWS ALLOWED to Administer > 40 Lashes, minus One > 39 Bloody Stripes

Sometimes PEOPLE DIED from this TORTUOUS EXPERIENCE

SUFFERING for Jesus is an HONOR which causes JOY!

What makes people REJOICE in SUFFERINGS?

How can people DEFY Authorities which HOLD Power of LIFE & DEATH?

Jesus is ALIVE!! > ALIVE in HISTORY and ALIVE in their HEARTS

The apostles were not so devoid of sense that they did not feel shame or that they had been wronged. They had not completely thrown out their nature. But when they reflected about the cause, joy took over. John Calvin

NOT EASY > HARD CHOICES > LIVES NO LESS COMPLICATED

Pressures / Problems / Temptations > REAL and IMAGINED – Face us TODAY

SOME PLACES > Attack is this BLATANT > Places NOT FAR AWAY

MOST PLACES Today > NOT So Blatant > NO LESS INSIDIOUS, EVIL

SIREN SONG of MATERIALISM: Should I not ENJOY Fruit of My LABOR?

We LIVE IT UP While Much of World is Trying to SIMPLY LIVE

Emphasis on EDUCATION: Should I not GIVE BEST to MY KIDS?

‘Best’ Means KIDS become WORLDLY WISE and SPIRITUALLY POOR

Need JOB > Support FAMILY > EMPLOYMENT becomes MASTER

BEST Efforts ADVANCE Kingdom of MAN > NOT Kingdom of GOD

Concern for FAMILY > Stagnates into ISOLATION from OTHERS

INDIVIDUALISM Cuts us OFF FROM the FAMILY of GOD

Focus on HEALTH > More FOCUS on QUANTITY of Life than QUALITY

Early Christians NOT LIVE LONG > But LIVED WELL > Live FOREVER

BECAUSE of their Efforts > Gamaliel Spoke TRULY

vs. 38,39 For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God.

The church of Jesus Christ, though buffeted and assailed on every side and riddled by heresy and persecution, will not fail. It cannot fail. R.C. Sproul

Almost 2000 Years since PALM SUNDAY

MANY of Us Here from Countries UNKNOWN Then

Now in NATION that OFFICIALLY says 'THERE IS NO GOD!'

Today All AROUND World – Church of Jesus in Every Nation – Sings His Praise:

“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Peace in heaven and  
glory in the highest!”

Luke 19.38

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## Acts 5:17-42

<sup>17</sup> Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. <sup>18</sup> They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. <sup>19</sup> But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. <sup>20</sup> "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people the full message of this new life." <sup>21</sup> At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people. When the high priest and his associates arrived, they called together the Sanhedrin-the full assembly of the elders of Israel-and sent to the jail for the apostles. <sup>22</sup> But on arriving at the jail, the officers did not find them there. So they went back and reported, <sup>23</sup> "We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside." <sup>24</sup> On hearing this report, the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were puzzled, wondering what would come of this. <sup>25</sup> Then someone came and said, "Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people." <sup>26</sup> At that, the captain went with his officers and brought the apostles. They did not use force, because they feared that the people would stone them. <sup>27</sup> Having brought the apostles, they made them appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. <sup>28</sup> "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood." <sup>29</sup> Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men! <sup>30</sup> The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead-whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. <sup>31</sup> God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. <sup>32</sup> We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him." <sup>33</sup> When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death. <sup>34</sup> But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while. <sup>35</sup> Then he addressed them: "Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. <sup>36</sup> Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. <sup>37</sup> After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered. <sup>38</sup> Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. <sup>39</sup> But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God." <sup>40</sup> His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name

of Jesus, and let them go. <sup>41</sup> The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. <sup>42</sup> Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.