



Acts: Gamaliel's Advice

February 22

INTRODUCTION: Acts: *Jesus' work, through the Apostles and disciples, by the Holy Spirit, to fulfil Acts 1:8.* As witness grows from Jerusalem through signs and sermons today we consider another response the Gospel message produces, that of Gamaliel.

KEY POINT: jealousy, protection, wisdom/discernment, joy

A.M. SERMON RECAP (Acts 5:12–16)

- How was the church expanding (Acts 1:8)
- What effect were these signs having on the Gospel?
- Why do people respond differently to the Gospel?
- General thoughts/discussion raised by the sermon...

P.M. SERMON RECAP (Acts 5:17–32)

- What does this passage teach us about persecution?
- What was the essence of their preaching?
- What priority did they have?

READ: Acts 5:33–42

QUESTIONS:

1. *Having been attacked by Satan from within the church is now attacked by Satan from without, again. This is the second form of persecution from the first (Acts 2:1–22).* What similarities and differences were there?
2. *Satan doesn't have the largest play book. How is persecution one of his age old tools?*
3. *Fuelled by jealousy (Acts 5:17) the High priest desired to kill the apostles (v. 33). What had enraged him?*
4. *To understand the difference between the High Priest's response and Gamaliel we must pause to understand the two leading parties in Judaism:*
 - a. *Sadducees-* were the priestly class who ruled the Temple. They were in league with the Romans. Only recognizing the Books of Moses they denied the

immorality of the soul, the Resurrection and Angels. Think ceremony and aristocracy.

- b. *Pharisees-* often Levitical teachers of the Law, prioritized observance of the Law as the expression of piety (developed during the Exile). Think piety and learning.
 - c. *Gamaliel* (v. 34)- a Pharisee, grandson of liberal Rabbi Hillel, given title "our teacher," mentor of Apostle Paul (22:3). Known for scholarship, wisdom & moderation.
5. How does this help us understand these people in our story?
 6. *V. 34b- hold this.*
 7. *Compare vv. 26, 34b and the outcome of the trial. How might Gamaliel/the Sanhedrin be called a people pleasers?*
 8. **Why is it of utmost importance Christians seek to please the Lord Jesus? (v. 29).**
 9. *Vv.35–39. Josephus describes the wider scene: "there were ten thousand other disorders in Judea, which were like tumults." Theudas is unknown outside of these verses. Josephus adds Judas led a revolt because of the tax, "...cowards if they would endure to pay a tax to the Romans." Both appeared, were killed and followers scattered.*
 10. **Vv. 38–39. Do you think his response represents advice or biblical wisdom? How can you tell?**
 11. **Does the success of something always reveal God's will?**
 12. **How do we learn of God's will?**
 13. **How is his response based upon a faulty notion of God's providence?**
 14. **What dangers would arise if we took his advice as an unchanging principle?**
 15. *The 1st persecution in Acts= a prohibition and warning; the 2nd prohibition and beating. V. 40- Likely the 39 lashes (Dt 25:3).*
 16. **Why is speaking "in Jesus name" so controversial?**
 17. **V. 41–42- Why is there joy in suffering; joy in obedience? (c.f. Mt 5:10–12)**
 18. How was their prayer for boldness (Acts 4:29) answered in their defiance, both publicly and privately.

NEXT: March 1-Acts 6:8–15, Stephen is Seized