



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Triumph over Tyranny: Fighting against God?

MAY 28-30, 2014

David Andersen / PO Box 2020, Chesterfield, VA 23832 / David.Andersen@capitolcom.org

Acts 5:34-42

“But a certain Pharisee stood up in the Council, Gamaliel by name, a teacher of the Law, honored by all the people, he commanded the men to go outside a little while, 35) Then he said to them, ‘Men, Israelites, you take heed to yourselves what you intend to habitually practice regarding these men. 36) For before these days Theudas arose, saying himself to be someone, to whom about four hundred men were attached; who was killed, and all, as many as were following him, were dispersed and came to nothing. 37) After this Judas the Galilean arose in the days of the Census and drew away people after him; and that man perished and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered. 38) And now therefore I say to you, depart from these men and leave them alone; because if this plan or this work may be of men, it will be destroyed. 39) But if it is from God, you will not be able (for yourselves) to destroy them, lest you might be found to be even fighters against God. And they were persuaded by him. 40) Having summoned the Apostles and beaten them, they commanded them not to be speaking in the name of Jesus and released them. 41) So therefore they were departing from the presence of the Council, continually rejoicing because they were deemed worthy to be dishonored on behalf of His name. 42) Most importantly, every day in the Temple and from house to house, they ceased not (for themselves) continually teaching and preaching the Gospel (for themselves) Jesus as the Messiah.”

“THE POSITION OF THE RULERS WHO CONTINUED TO REJECT CHRIST HAD BECOME EXTREMELY DIFFICULT AND DANGEROUS.” J. A. ALEXANDER

Who is Gamaliel and why is he defending the Apostles? What had become the habit of the Council, or Congress of Israel, regarding all who opposed them or questioned their authority? When had these false Messiah’s arisen in Israel and led so many after them? What does the word “depart” refer to? Does this Council actually leave the Apostles alone as Gamaliel required? Why would government leaders fight against God? Why are the bleeding and lacerated Apostles rejoicing? What was the most important thing that they continued to do? How does the Bible promote a separation of the church and state?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- JUNE 4-6: ACTS 6:1-7 THE KEYS TO WINNING LEADERS: PRAYER AND THE WORD OF GOD
- JUNE 11-13: BIBLE STUDY POSTPONED NATIONAL PASTORS’ CONFERENCE NEAR DC

Accompanying the civil disobedience which the Apostles continually pursued with their prayers, preaching, material and physical provision, with perfect unity among the many thousands gathering daily in the Temple, was an unparalleled popularity among the people. Yet so unpopular were the Sadducees that, though they held the majority in the Congress of Israel, they usually followed the will of the Pharisees, the minority opposing party, because the Pharisees were so popular and they wanted to keep their positions. Also unpopular was a denial of a resurrection by the Sadducees in contrast to the Pharisees who, though they did not like the witness about Jesus Christ and His death on the cross (the legal murder they had helped orchestrate), they were pleased that at least they gained political advantage when so many people were convinced by the Apostles of Christ’s resurrection. As Peter defended their civil disobedience by placing the Congress in opposition against God with the words, “It is necessary to obey the authority of God more than men” (Acts 5:29), the President of this Council and leader of the Pharisees, Gamaliel, saw a political opportunity to escape this opposition to God by making the Sadducees own it.

BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY @ 12:00NOON – OCCOQUAN – MADIGAN’S WATERFRONT SEAFOOD RESTAURANT – 201 MILL STREET

THURSDAY @ 7:00AM – BIBLE STUDY – CHESTER – SHONEY’S AT RT. 10 (IRON BRIDGE ROAD) & 301(12531 JEFFERSON DAVIS HIGHWAY)

FRIDAY @ 7:00 AM – BIBLE STUDY – NORFOLK – GOLDEN CORRAL, 6103 N. MILITARY HWY, NEAR THE NORFOLK AIRPORT

Virginia

Triumph over Tyranny: Fighting against God?

“THE SADDUCEAN LEADERS OF THE SANHEDRIN WERE SO ENRAGED AT THIS DEFIANCE OF THEIR ORDERS THAT THEY CONSIDERED PASSING THE SENTENCE OF DEATH (BY STONING, NO DOUBT) ON THE APOSTLES. BUT THEY COULD TAKE NO SUCH ACTION WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF THE PHARISAIC MEMBERS OF THE COURT.”

F. F. BRUCE

I. ABSOLUTELY CONVINCING DEFENSE ACTS 5:34-39

As the Sadducees began plotting the legal murder of all the Apostles, Gamaliel rose to overturn the rash fury of his fellow legislators. Luke describes him as a respected leader, “*a teacher of the law, honored by all the people.*” The first of the Rabbi’s (meaning “my teacher”) to receive the title “Rabban” (“our teacher”), likely he was the son of Simeon who took Jesus in his arms (Lk. 2:25-35), and the grandson of the famous teacher, Hillel. His name meant “bestowed of God” and when he died in AD 52, they mourned, “Since Rabban Gamaliel the Elder died there has been no more reverence for the law, and purity and abstinence died out at the same time.” First Gamaliel dismissed the Apostles temporarily so that they could deliberate in a private session. Then, in a smooth blame shift regarding Jesus’ crucifixion, he warned the Council against the murderous intentions of the Sadducees, which they “*habitually practice.*” With the need for two witnesses (Deut. 17:6), he reminded them of Theudas and Judas the Galilean who both posed as Messiah’s, were killed and their people dispersed. Then he demanded “*depart from these men and leave them alone, if this plan or work be of men, it will be destroyed. But if it is from God, You will not be able to destroy them, lest you might be found to be even fighters against God.*” Indicting the Sadducees, he agreed it was of God!

“IT WAS AN INSTANCE OF GREAT SHREWDNESS AND PRUDENCE.”

ALBERT BARNES

II. ASSALT CRUELLY DEMORALIZING ACTS 5:40

The Sadducees realize too late that they have been cornered by the words of Peter and the Minority Leader! Hoping that the word will not get out about their habit of murderous intent, they hesitantly agree with Gamaliel. Yet they are still thirsting for the blood of the defiant disciples. So their habitual hatred repeats the pattern of their unlawful, unjust trial of Christ (Mt. 26:67-68) and again the judges brutally attack the defendants! The innocent Apostles are beaten before the court with a word that means “to flay the skin.” The Pharisees allow it with a smug resignation to see if it will stop the Apostles, thus proving their movement to be of men, or of God. This beating was the brutal 39 stripes with a three strap leather whip which was known to sometimes take men’s lives. Then they re-issued their gag order to silence them.

“BUT WATCH OUT FOR YOURSELVES, FOR THEY WILL DELIVER YOU UP TO COUNCILS, AND YOU WILL BE BEATEN IN THE SYNAGOGUES. YOU WILL BE BROUGHT BEFORE RULERS AND KINGS FOR MY SAKE, FOR A TESTIMONY TO THEM.”

MARK 13:9

III. ALWAYS CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE ACTS 5:41-42

While their blood is still streaming down their backs, the Apostles “*were departing from the Council, continually rejoicing because they were deemed worthy to be dishonored on behalf of His name.*” These rugged, sturdy, resilient men are not to be stopped in their loyal, unwavering dedication to Jesus Christ. Such dishonorable, brutal treatment by the leaders became a badge of honor that caused them to rejoice together that they had now been worthy to suffer with their Savior. Then, “*most importantly,*” they continued their civil disobedience every day publically in the Temple and privately in homes, fulfilling their priority of teaching and preaching the Gospel—Jesus as the Messiah King!

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) What is it that you “*habitually practice*” as a leader in our state and nation?
- 2) Have you ever considered the sacrifice and often suffering that God grants to His children to give you His Gospel truth?
- 3) Most importantly, is your loyalty to God demonstrated as a bold witness for Jesus Christ or do you fight against God?