

Obedience Is the Key

BY ALLEN JAMES

Read Acts 5:12-42.

Why were the apostles arrested? (Acts 5:12-17)

When confronted about teaching in the name of Jesus, what was the response of the apostles? _____

What teacher of the law negotiated for the apostles? _____

What was his reasoning? _____

What punishment did the apostles receive? _____

What was their response? _____

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Within the context of this event, God had been providing His power to the apostles through the Holy Spirit to heal people and to perform other miracles and wonders. Because of these miracles and wonders, great crowds began to follow the apostles. The Jewish culture of that day always looked for a sign or an attesting miracle to prove that something was from God. As a result of these miracles and wonders, the crowds continued to grow and the Jewish religious leaders were becoming threatened and jealous of the apostles. Therefore, the apostles were placed in jail. But, God was still with them. God released them so they could teach and proclaim the gospel once again. The apostles seemed to have a “no fear” attitude.

What was at stake for the religious leaders of that day? _____

Was the issue the miracles the apostles were performing or the popularity they were gaining? _____

Why were the apostles so willing to do whatever it took to share Christ?

What are your fears in sharing the gospel?

“We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29, NIV)

In what areas are you asking God for His power to help you take a stand for Him?

In Acts 5:27-29, what word best characterizes the apostles' response to the question of the Sanhedrin?

In many countries throughout the world, persecution of Christians is a harsh reality. Perhaps in America the day is coming when believers will have to pay a price for following Jesus. Peter and the apostles said, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29, NIV)!

As Christians, we are taught to respect and obey those in authority. We abide by the laws of God and man. When the two are in conflict, practicing Christians are caught in a very personal and real dilemma. Even the most "civil" disobedience is difficult for most Christians. Fortunately, God has given us examples to follow in His Word. See two more examples in Daniel 3 and 6.

When we disobey the laws of man, we must be ready and willing to pay the consequences. God will not always open prison doors, but He promises to never leave us.

What punishment did the apostles receive? (v. 40) _____

What was their response? (v. 41) _____

What did Jesus say about this kind of suffering? (Matthew 5:10-12) _____

What benefit of suffering did Paul point out? (Philippians 3:10) _____

Throughout this passage of Scripture, the apostles never brought any attention to themselves personally. They were only striving to share Jesus with a lost world. They were resolved to share the gospel with everyone they encountered. *On mission* Christians live to share the gospel no matter what!