

How did the apostles view their current circumstance?

5:33-42

The apostles had a proper worldview that God is sovereign over all things, therefore joyfully suffered in obedience for the sake of Jesus' name.

When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. v. 33

How did the religious leaders respond to the confrontation and call for repentance found in Jesus the Messiah?

God's sovereign plan included using even those who were in opposition.

But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while. And he said to them, "Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men. vv.34-35

Who was Gamaliel?
What did he say?

For before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. After him Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered. vv.36-38

So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!" So they took his advice, and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. vv.39-40

What was the point of the history being told?
Why does this happen?

Joy is produced among the apostles because they faithfully and confidently obeyed.

Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus. vv.41-42

Who will they continue to obey even after they suffer?
Will the apostles remain firm amid ramped up pressure from the opposition?
What is the result of obeying God even in the midst of suffering?

Who will you obey, especially in the midst of hardship and suffering?

What will you let shape who you obey?

Is your obedience based on having confidence in God's plan?

Sunday, August 23, 2026
Chan Ling, Intern

ACTS—The Confident Witness of Jesus Christ
No. 14 | Witnessing in Jerusalem, pt. 6

Acts 5:17-42

Review

Acts is a theological history written to Theophilus to reveal how the early church was born and how it grew, developed, and progressed over the first 30 years.

Primary Theme:

- Jesus and his continuing ministry through his apostles.
- The Holy Spirit empowering believers for faithful gospel proclamation for the growth of the universal church in different circumstances, different people groups, and different geographical locations.
- Those who hear and believe the witness of Jesus Christ can and should be confident in following the way by having confidence in God's word and truth.

Witnessing in Jerusalem, pt. 6

5:17-42

1-2 Purpose Statement and Introduction

The resurrected Jesus commissioned his apostles to be his witnesses in "Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Jesus ascended, and the apostles were ordered to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit to come.

The apostles (with the company of 120) obediently waited, while actively giving themselves to prayer and God's word.

The Holy Spirit came with undeniable signs. Peter, filled with the Spirit, testified to the Jews from all the nations about the resurrected Christ and the forgiveness of sins through Him.

3:1-8:3 Witnessing in Jerusalem

(3:1-5:42) Witnessing in the temple and from house to house

Peter and John took an opportunity to act and speak. 3:1-26

Peter and John stood boldly before the opposition that arose. 4:1-22

The new community prayed for faithfulness to continue to speak the word of God with boldness in the face of opposition. 4:23-31

The early church (ἐκκλησία) was esteemed for having the characteristics of unity, love, and holiness. 4:32-5:12

The early church was faithful to God in unity before the people and trusted God in obedience to His Word, while God caused the growth. 5:12-16

What happens when their resolve to obey God, that is, to speak the word of God with boldness, is tested?

The apostles demonstrate *confident obedience* that results in *joy*, especially in the face of increased pressure from opposition, even to the point of *suffering*.

Will the apostles continue to obey Jesus by being his witnesses in Jerusalem when it gets hard?...even if it costs them comfort and safety?

Why were the apostles so confident to obey?

5:17-32

The apostles saw that God shows, by means of supernatural intervention, that He is actively participating in the growth of the Church.

How is the narrative continuing to unfold contextually? vv.12-16

But the high priest rose up and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and filled with jealousy they arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison. vv.17-18

Why were the religious leader 'filled with jealousy'?

God intervened to affirm the message of Jesus Christ.

But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life." vv. 19-20

What were they told to do?
What were 'all the words of this Life'?

God released them to show that no earthly leaders will thwart the power of God. And the apostles obeyed.

And when they heard this, they entered the temple at daybreak and began to teach. v. 21a

Why the temple?
What did they teach?

Now when the high priest came, and those who were with him, they called together the council, all the senate of the people of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the officers came, they did not find them in the prison, so they returned and reported, vv. 21b-22

Who was the high priest?
What was the purpose for calling the council?

The intervention was supernatural.

"We found the prison securely locked and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them we found no one inside." Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed about them, wondering what this would come to. vv. 23-24

What was reported and how was it reported?
What were they perplexed about?

The apostles continued to speak and teach the Word of God.

And someone came and told them, "Look! The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people." Then the captain with the officers went and brought them, but not by force, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people. vv. 25-26

Why were the captain and his officers afraid?
How did the apostles respond?

The counsel charged the apostles for their defiance of the prohibition they had been given.

And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, saying, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us." vv. 27-28

What did the question reveal about the high priest's disposition?
How is the charged cast?

Peter with the apostles confidently witnessed to the leaders of Israel.

But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. vv. 29-31

What is different about Peter's answer from the previous account of his imprisonment?
How did Peter answer the high priest's charge?
Who had ultimate authority over what the apostles said or did not say?

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

Why did they say what they said?