

Acts 031

The Necessity of Civil Disobedience

Acts 5:19-29

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Let's take our Bibles and open them to Acts chapter 5. Acts 5:19. Continuing our verse-by-verse study through the book of Acts this evening. And back in chapter 5:1-11, we had the Ananias and Sapphira situation there which was an internal problem within the church. And then from there we move to an external problem where you have a persecution and an arrest of the apostles. So, verses 12 through 16 is a description of the church's power that created the jealousy that sort of paved way for the persecution by the Sadducees and the Sanhedrin, the official governing body of Israel at that time, to lay hands on the apostles physically in terms of arrest. So, verses 1 through 11, God dealt with the internal purity of the church through the divine maximum divine discipline of Ananias and Sapphira. Purity always leads to power, which you see in verses 12 through 16. But as that power through the apostles is being manifested, it leads to jealousy by the Sanhedrin, particularly the Sadducees, leading to the arrest of the apostles. So, after the apostles' power, verses 12 through 16, you now see their persecution, verses 17 through 42. So, we started looking at 17 through 42 last time. But we have the arrest and instigators, verses 17 and 18. And then there's a divine rescue, verses 19 through 21.

A. Apostles' Arrest (Acts 5:17-26)

1. Arrest's cause & instigators (17-18)
2. **Divine rescue (19-21a)**
3. Sanhedrin's meeting (21b-24)
4. Apostles' second arrest (25-26)

So, let's pick it up there in verse 19. You see the means of the divine rescue after the apostles are jailed. Verse 19 it says: But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the gates of the prison, and taking them out he said, and then in verse 20 the angel gives a command. So as far as I can tell, this is the first example where an angel is dispatched from heaven to help the apostles in a time of need. And actually, that's what angels are supposed to do, right? The book of Hebrews 1:14, concerning angels

says, *are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?* In this case, the apostles. So that's why angels exist. Angels exist to help God's people who are inheritors of salvation. And that's why, you see, it's actually an angel of the Lord that opens the gates of the prison that the apostles are thrown in, taking them out. So, this is the first manifestation of an angel in the book of Acts. As we keep going through the book of Acts, you're going to see angels doing a lot of things like this. For example, in Acts 8:26, it says: *But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, "Get up and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza."*

So, the angel told Philip to do that, to leave Samaria where a revival was happening. And he says, go stand on this road that connects Jerusalem and Gaza, a desert road. Because the angel knows who's going to be coming down that road--the Ethiopian eunuch who's going to be seeking the things of God, who's not going to know the gospel, but he wants to know it. And the angel knew that the Ethiopian eunuch would be showing up. So, he says, Philip, go get on this road. And all information will be given on a need-to-know basis. Philip wasn't told why. Just get on this road and further instructions will be coming. But this is how the Ethiopian eunuch would come to know Christ. And once the Ethiopian eunuch gets saved, this is how the gospel gets down south into Ethiopia. So, you notice that it's an angel that set this whole thing up in terms of divine guidance. Angels serving God, guiding the apostles. Another angel is going to show up in Acts 12:7-10. It says: *Behold, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared [at night] and a light shone in the cell; and he struck Peter's side and woke him up--* kind of like an alarm clock--*"Get up quickly."* *And his chains fell off his hands.* So, when Peter is going to be jailed in Acts 1, again it's going to be an angel that gets him out of jail.

And then, Herod Agrippa in the same chapter is going to get a little too full of himself. The crowd, as he's speaking is going to say the voice of God and not man. And Herod won't give glory to the Lord. So that same chapter, Acts 12:23 says: *immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died.* Wow. So, you know, you read all these stories in the Bible that are happening, and it's kind of interesting how angels are dispatched, you know, to play a role in these things that are taking place. And that's an outworking of Hebrews 1:14. They exist to render service to those who will inherit salvation. So that's why when these apostles are jailed in Acts 5:19, in Jerusalem, it's an angel that miraculously gets him out of jail. And then the angel gives a command. And you see that in verse 20 of

Acts 5. And the angel said, verse 19, then into verse 20, *"Go, stand and speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this Life."* So, get out of jail. I just let you out miraculously. Go to the temple, which is a public place. And notice the instructions here: *"speak the whole message of this life."* Christianity is about life.

Jesus said in John 10:10, *"The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."* One of the greatest deceptions of Satan in the minds of unsaved people is he gets them to believe that if they trust Jesus for salvation and submit to Him as their disciples, and He's going to take their lives and just ruin it. Many, many people are kept away from Christ because of that satanic lie. But actually, it's the opposite. Jesus says when you lose your life for His sake, you find it. And life really begins with a relationship with God. Jesus is not in the business of destroying the lives of people. It's the opposite. He's in the business of emancipating the lives of people and giving those lives the full expression that they were always designed to have. So, the apostles are told, get out of jail, and go preach the whole message of this life, which undoubtedly would include the resurrection. Because Jesus was dead and then He was alive. You find the disciples, the apostles, all the way through the book of Acts, but particularly here early on talking about the resurrected Jesus. Peter makes an issue of it in Acts 2:24, in that opening sermon on the day of Pentecost. When Peter gets the opportunity to preach to unbelieving Israel in Acts 3:15, he makes an issue of the resurrection.

And this, of course, is why the Sadducees hated early Christianity. The Sadducees, who are behind this persecution, denied resurrection period, let alone the resurrection of Jesus. So, in Matthew 22:23 it says, *On that day some Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection) came to Jesus and questioned him.* So, these are people, a religious sect within the governance of Israel, pretty dominant here in the temple area in Jerusalem, who didn't even believe in resurrection. And so, they didn't like the message of the apostles that kept emphasizing resurrection. So, they put the apostles in jail. The angel gets him out and says, go right back into the temple area, a public place, and preach the message of life, which would undoubtedly involve the resurrection. And you'll notice that this angel doesn't say, 'Uh, you know, you're under arrest and you better obey the laws of the land. You better submit to governing authority.' Because after all, that's what Christians are supposed to do, right? They're supposed to blindly follow whatever the governing authorities tell them to do. Uh, in fact,

the angel tells them to do the opposite. They were instructed (Acts 4:17-18) not to teach anymore in the name of Yeshua or Jesus. That's what the governing authorities were telling them to do.

And the angel, when he let them out of the jail, doesn't say, submit to authority, stay in the jail, you know, don't teach anymore in the name of Jesus. But go right back into the temple area. Go directly against the command of the Sadducees and preach the life of Jesus Christ. And I say that because there's a school of thought today within modern day Christianity that says, whatever the government tells us to do, we have to do. I think it's a misreading of Romans 13. And it's starting to get real here in the United States, because we just came out of a of a period when the government said, don't go to church. They started to put regulations and restrictions on singing within the church, what kind of singing you could do, who could lead the singing. These are all these sorts of mask mandates that we just came out of. Don't go to church. Stay at home. Well, the problem is the Bible says to do the exact opposite. It says, do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together, as is the habit of some. The problem is, the Bible says the opposite. It says God inhabits the praises of his people. So, for the first time, one of the first times in the United States, we're having to think through very carefully the whole issue of civil disobedience. When there's a conflict between what the state says and what God says, what do we do? Who do we follow? Some people say you just follow the state no matter what.

I heard many, many prominent voices within Christianity during the lockdown arguing that point. And they go to Romans 13. Submit to the laws of the land. And you'll notice that the angel here knew absolutely nothing of that doctrine. They were put in jail, he let them out of jail. He gave them a command to leave the jail. And then he told him to go right back into the temple area and preach the very message that the governing authority said don't preach. So, this Acts 5 as we're going to see, particularly verse 29, if we get there this evening, where the apostles are going to say 'we must obey God rather than man,' you know, really becomes a key chapter for us as we think through the whole issue of civil disobedience.

A. Apostles' Arrest (Acts 5:17-26)

1. Arrest's cause & instigators (17-18)
2. **Divine rescue (19-21a)**

- a. Means (19)
- b. Command (20)
- c. Apostolic obedience (21a)

So, we have the means of the rescue. The command that the apostles are to follow. And then the apostles, of course, obey what the angel said. And you see that there in verse 21: *Upon hearing this, they (the apostles) entered into the temple about daybreak and began to teach.* And immediately when they began to teach about the life of Jesus and the resurrection of Jesus, they were going directly against what the Sadducees had commanded Peter and John not to do.

I mentioned earlier Acts 4:17-18. But here, here's what it says: *"But so that it will not spread any further among the people, let us warn them--"* That's the Sanhedrin and the Sadducees speaking. *"...let us warn them to speak no longer to any man in this name." And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.* So, when they did it again and were jailed again the angel lets them out and says, go right back to doing what you were doing originally. Obey God and not the mandate of the Sadducees. And so that's what the apostles did. I mean, they're going directly against what the state is telling them to do. And it's at this point the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling body, has a meeting. And the meeting is described in verses 21 through 24. We have an assembly, verse 21. They figure out the prison is empty, second part of verse 21 through verse 23. And then you have the response of the rulers. And so, the ruling authorities are trying to figure out how these guys got out of prison.

- A. Apostles' Arrest (Acts 5:17-26)
 - 1. Arrest's cause & instigators (17-18)
 - 2. Divine rescue (19-21a)
 - 3. **Sanhedrin's meeting (21b-26)**
 - a. Assembly (21b)
 - b. Empty prison (21c-23)
 - c. Rulers' response (24)

So, notice first of all their assembly, verse 21. Second part of it says: *Now when the high priest and his associates came, they called the Council together, even all--*

notice that word "all" --*the Senate of the sons of Israel*. So, what you have now is not just a situation where some of Israel's leadership is involved in coming against the apostles. Now the whole group of them is coming together. And the reason this is highlighted is it's now paving the way for the full persecution, you know, by Israel against the apostles. And one of the first things I noticed, obviously, is the prison we put these apostles in is now empty. How did these guys get out? They're perplexed by this. We're not perplexed because we know an angel of the Lord led him out. But they make an issue out of this empty prison. They send in some officers, very end of verse 21. It says: *...and sent orders to the prison house for them to be brought*. And then they discover that the prison is empty. Verse 22: *But the officers who came did not find them in the prison*. And now the officers report what is happening to everybody else in leadership in the Sanhedrin. It says, end of verse 22: *they returned and reported back*, (verse 23) *saying, "We found the prison house locked quite securely and the guards standing at the doors; But when we opened up, we found no one inside."*

It's kind of like the tomb of Jesus. I mean, there's no way Jesus got out of that tomb except by a divine miracle. You know, the rock that was placed over the tomb entrance was so big it could not be moved. There was a guard stationed outside the tomb. Had Jesus in His weakened state, I guess, pushed the giant tomb rock away and gotten out somehow because He didn't die? A lot of people teach that; that's called the swoon theory. That's how they explain the empty tomb of Jesus. Which to me takes more faith to believe that than it does to believe the simple, straightforward biblical story. But had that even happened, the Roman soldier that was stationed there would have probably lost his life, because we know from extra-biblical writings that if a prisoner escapes on your watch, you came under the force of the Roman government. So, you know, just like there was no way for Jesus to get out of there other than by a miracle, I mean, the same thing is happening here. The doors are securely locked, the guards are there. There's no possible way of escape. And yet they go into the [prison] to find these apostles, to bring them out for examination. And the [prison] is empty. So that leads to their response. They're completely perplexed by this. Verse 24: *Now when the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed--* as you can imagine-- *about them as to what would come of this*. Uh, this word "perplexed" is interesting in Greek. It's a term that only Luke uses. You only find it in Luke's writings. And Luke kind of uses this to describe what's going through the mind of the governing authorities. You know, what's going to happen if this continues. What's

going to happen once it gets out that miracles are happening, and the apostles are escaping and they continue to preach in the temple compound. So, this now leads to the second arrest of the same group, the apostles. In verses 25 and 26, the rulers discover what's going on. At least where the apostles are now; in the temple area preaching. They're not in the prison where they're supposed to be.

A. Apostles' Arrest (Acts 5:17-26)

1. Arrest's cause & instigators (17-18)
2. Divine rescue (19-21a)
3. Sanhedrin's meeting (21b-26)
4. **Apostles' second arrest (25-26)**
 - a. Rulers' discover (25)
 - b. Apostles' arrest (26)

Verse 25, But someone came and reported to them, *"The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!"* So, they got out of prison. They're in the temple. They're preaching the people to the people; going directly against the Sadducees orders given in Acts 4:17-18, where they were told to speak no longer in the in this man's name, to not speak or teach at all in in the name of the Lord Jesus. And if that weren't enough, they're talking over and over again about the full life of Christ. They're making reference repeatedly to the resurrection of Jesus, when the Sadducees that were controlling this governmental panel didn't believe in the resurrection at all. So, this leads to the apostles second arrest. Verse 26: *Then the captain went along with the officers and proceeded to bring them back without violence.*

Why didn't they inflict violence on the on the apostles? The rest of verse 26 explains that. There's a parenthetical comment, *(for they were afraid of the people, that they might be stoned)*. So, when it talks there in verse 26 about how the captain went along with the officers and proceeded to bring them back, this is now a full-fledged external attack on the church. And one of the things to watch as we work through Acts 4:5-6 is the alternation between external attack, internal attack. External attack, internal attack. For example, Peter and John got into trouble and they were jailed Acts 4-- external attack. Then you have Satan within the church using Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:1-11-- internal attack. That's followed by the account that we're reading now. The second arrest of the apostles, that's an external attack. That's going to go all the way

through the end of chapter 5. Then you're going to have another crisis in Acts 6:1-7 where there's an internal problem within the church that's so severe that it's going to pull the apostles away from what God has called them to do; lead through the ministry of the word and prayer. It's trying to get them sidetracked into service projects. So, God has to raise up another office, the office of deacon, to take this responsibility out of the hands of the apostles so they can continue to do what God has called them to do.

And that's why the church keeps growing. But right there in Acts 6:1-7 is an internal attack that almost derailed the church. And then you get outside of that, and you get to chapter 6:8, all the way through the end of chapter 7, and you have the first martyrdom of the Church Age. The martyrdom of Stephen, who was one of the deacons selected. And that now becomes an external attack. So, you see what's happened here? External attack, chapter 4. Internal attack, chapter 5:1-11. External attack, chapter 5:12 through the end of chapter 5. Internal attack, chapter 6:1-7. External attack, chapter 6:8 through the end of chapter 7. So that's pretty much how Satan works over and over again. And if you're around the life of the church very long, you'll see this over and over again. If an attack is not coming externally, it's probably going to come from within. And if it's not coming from within, it's probably going to come from without. Because Satan really has two great strategies. He tries to destroy the life of the church from without, bringing something outside against it. And when that doesn't work, he operates within the church.

He stops trying to attack the church, and then he applies for church membership and volunteers to teach Sunday school and that kind of stuff. And he tries to damage the church from within, or he tries to get on the elder board, you know, or become one of the deacons and damage the church from within. So, I mean, Satan does this over and over again. I'm not in the business of giving Satan advice, so I hope he's not listening to what I'm saying, but I think his internal strategy is far more effective than his external strategy. Because every time Satan attacks the church from the outside, it always grows. Every single time. If you want to see the church grow, persecute it and it starts to grow. That's what's going on here in the book of Acts. The church is vibrant, and alive and well under some of the most, today, despotic regimes on planet earth, whether it's China or Iran. You have a great, vibrant underground church in those parts of the world. And in those parts of the world where the church is not being physically attacked from the outside and Satan is working on the inside, he tends to kind of derail

the church's purpose. So, everybody is, you know, afraid of the next mandate, the next lockdown, the next crisis.

And by the way, you can watch on YouTube these government people. One guy was trying to lead his church in New York in the midst of all of the lockdowns. And there they are, you know, coming to the door of the church, telling him to stop. And he says, well, I have constitutional rights. And it's kind of interesting to listen to the government bureaucrats, police officers, etc. talk to him and you can watch it on YouTube. They say the Constitution has been suspended. Your constitutional rights are suspended because we're in a crisis. Well, I'm sorry, that's not what the First Amendment says. It's not what the Declaration of Independence says. The Declaration of Independence says we have rights from God. It doesn't say you have rights as long as there's not a crisis, as long as there's not an epidemic of some kind. And by the way, America's Founding Fathers knew all about epidemics and crises and health scares. In fact, the health scares that went on in the founding era were much bigger than what happens today. So, this idea that somehow your rights are suspended because of a health crisis or a virus or something like that, is about as far afield from what this country was set up to be. And yet that's what people believe; that the government has some kind of right to come into a church, to shut it down, to fine it out of existence if it won't comply. Because of some kind of pandemic.

The government doesn't have the right to do that at all. But we've sort of bought the lie. We're very much afraid of external persecution. But what you'll discover is when the church is persecuted like that, it will always grow. So maybe the next crisis or the next pandemic may not be the worst thing in the world when you think about it. Maybe that's what we need here in the United States of America, a little bit. But you'll notice how cowardly these Sadducees are. They arrested the apostles, but they would not, commit any violence against them. Which they are going to commit violence against them at the end of the chapter. This is going to grow to the point where you have the first physical infliction of violence by the government against the new church. But here at the outset or the onset, they wouldn't commit violence against the apostles because they were afraid of the people. The apostles' message was getting out and was popular amongst the people. And so, they were afraid that the people were actually going to rise up and throw stones at the Sadducees and kill them. So, they wouldn't lay physical violence on the apostles. Now you might say that sounds familiar. That's what

happened with Jesus, right? And it the same exact thing happened to Jesus. In Matthew 21:46, it says: *When they sought to seize him--* In this case, the Pharisees-- *they feared the people, because they* (the people) *considered Him to be a prophet.* So, the identical kind of ministry that Jesus had when He was on the earth is now being replicated in the lives of the apostles. It's just that Jesus is now executing this ministry from the Father's right hand through the church. So that's why there's so many similarities between what the early church is going through and what Jesus went through. It's still Jesus. It's just a different kind of ministry. He's not executing it and accomplishing it through His incarnation. He's now at the Father's right hand. He's accomplishing that through His High Priestly ministry. And so that becomes the reason for a lot of these parallels. This leads to the examination of the apostles, verses 27 through 33. The apostles are brought in, verse 27.

A. Apostles' arrest (17-26)

B. **Apostles' examination (27-33)**

1. **Apostles brought in (27)**

2. High priest's accusations (28)

3. Apostles' response (29-32)

4. Sanhedrin's reaction (33)

It says: *When they had brought them, they stood before--* Now look at this, these are not the lightweights anymore. These are the heavy hitters. ...*they stood them before the Council.* The high priest questioned them, So, the persecution is escalating because now the heavy hitters are brought in here to try to figure out what's going on. Full Council equals full persecution which leads to the high priest's accusations. Now he launches two accusations against them. The first one is: you're violating the command that was given to you earlier, not to teach anymore in the name of Jesus. And you see that in verse 28: *[The high priest] saying, "We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name."* And what a compliment, look at this. *"and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching."* The original command, I quoted it a couple times earlier, Acts 4:17-18. They were specifically told: *"so that it will not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no longer to any man in this name."* And when *they had summoned them, they commanded them not to teach or to speak at all in the name of Jesus.* And the first thing the high priest points out is, you're breaking our command. We gave you an executive order, you know. And it's kind of interesting. All

these mandates that came down in 2020, did you know that none of them were laws? Because in the United States, a law has to go through the legislative branch. There were no laws telling churches not to meet, not to sing, and all these kinds of things. These were all executive orders by governors mandating things when there was no legislative debate on any of this stuff. It's all these governors, particularly in the bluer states, you know, grabbing legislative power that did not belong to them.

And I was trying to do some traveling because I had a conference scheduled, believe it or not, during a lot of this time. And you'd hear this announcement, you know, in the airport about, you know, put your mask on and keep your mask on, and, you know, you can lower your mask while you're chewing or drinking. In which case I just chewed longer than normal so I could breathe. Because I think I have a constitutional right to breathe. How's that for a strange way of thinking? And they would say, if you don't do this, you're violating federal law. They said, and it's kind of one of these things in the airport where they say it, and then they say the exact same thing five minutes later as if you forgot what they said five minutes earlier. And they keep saying it and saying it and saying it. If you don't, you're violating federal law. And I kept saying to myself mentally, well, that's a lie. Every time they said "law," I said, that's a lie. Because there was no law. A law has to go through the legislative branch of government, where there's actual legislative hearings and witnesses and experts are summoned, and you can have an actual discussion or a debate, and only when it gets through the legislative process does it get to the executive branch for either his acceptance or a veto. None of that happened during 2020 and beyond.

They kept saying, you're violating federal law. And I kept saying, I'm not violating any federal law because there is no law. So, these are powers that bluish state governors grabbed, and the federal executive branch of government grabbed, and they pushed this on everybody, making it sound like you're breaking a law if you don't abide-- when there was no law. So, the whole thing was just-- it was a sham, it's what it was. And yet we all, me included, dutifully submitted. Some people arguing that if you rebel against it, you're going against the will of God. So, we have to start thinking through this. So, an executive order was given not to teach anymore. This is what is being said here. If there's anything the devil wants to stop, he wants to stop the teaching of the Word of God. The Word of God needs to be taught in churches consistently and forthrightly. Doctor Dan Wallace, his commentary on Second Timothy says-- which is a pastoral

epistle. He writes: "By my count, there are twenty-seven explicit commands given in the body of this letter. In 27 words Paul tells pastors what to focus on. You have to be blind to miss the thrust of Paul's instructions here, because eighteen of those commands--fully two-thirds--have to do with the ministry of the Word."

So, pastors are told to teach the word, to preach the word in season and out of season. And this is what Satan is always trying to stop. This is what the Sadducees were trying to stop here in Acts 4 and Acts 5. We're told that Satan seeks to stop this in the parable of the sower. Where Jesus spoke of an interim age, before the kingdom is established on the earth, when the Word of God is going out. And it's interesting to watch how Satan is trying to stop the ministry of the word in the parable of the sower. Luke 8:5 says, *"The sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell beside the road, and it was trampled underfoot. And the birds of the sky ate it up."* So, the disciples asked, well, what is this-- what does this mean? And Jesus explains it in Luke 8:12, He says, *"Those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they will not believe and be saved."* So, when the Word of God goes out, Satan is perpetually at work trying to prevent people from really hearing or understanding what is being said. And Satan uses all kinds of strategies to do this.

It's kind of interesting how my mind can focus perfectly on Star Wars for two hours. But when I listen to a sermon God wants me to listen to, my mind wanders all over the place. I mean, why is that? Maybe there's something spiritual at work. So, Satan is always at work trying to weaken the proclamation of God's Word right down to illegalizing it if he if he gets an opportunity. So, the Sadducees are saying, the high priest is saying, going out and preaching the resurrected Christ is illegal. And we're upset about that because you broke our command. And by the way, we're double upset about it because you filled Jerusalem with your doctrine. What's your doctrine? A resurrected Jesus. When we don't even believe in the concept of resurrection. Boy, I hope that this accusation is said of Sugar Land Bible Church. You know, you filled the church world with your doctrine. You filled the city of Sugar Land with your doctrine. You filled the whole internet up with your doctrine. I mean, that would be a tremendous compliment because it's really not our doctrine, right? It's the Lord's doctrine. And that's what we're in the business of doing. We're in the business of getting the Word of God out as much as we possibly can through the pulpit. But there's a better way to do it

besides the pulpit. The pulpit can equip the flock, and then you can do it in your sphere of influence, because this pulpit doesn't have access to the people that you have access to. The people that you work with, or people in your family that are unbelievers will never listen to a word from this pulpit. But you have access to those people. And so, if this pulpit can equip you so that you could be a faithful witness wherever God has put you in the workplace, in the family, whatever, what will happen is we'll fill up Sugar Land and related areas [with] God's word. And that the high priest could say the same thing about us. I mean, you filled up Sugar Land with your doctrine. That's why we're upset.

And then notice the second accusation of the high priest: *"...and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."* Now, notice they keep calling him this man. That is so common in Judaism, where there is such a-- I'm talking about unbelieving Judaism now. Where there is such a hatred of Jesus that the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the rabbis, they won't even speak out his name. So, this man testifies to the fact that the Jewish leadership still failed to mention the name of Yeshua. You know, it's like when you don't like somebody, you have a grudge against somebody. So, when the topic of them comes up in conversation, you just are so upset about them that you refer to them as, oh yeah, so-and-so says, because you dislike the person so much, you don't even want to bring up their name.

That's essentially what the Sadducees are doing with the name Jesus, the Hebrew name Yeshua. They won't even bring Him up in polite society. They just refer to Him as "this man." Ultimately, it's Satan that hates the name of Jesus. Because we know from Philippians 2:10-11, it says of the name of Jesus: *so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* And Philippians 2:9, For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and *bestowed on him the name which is above every name*-- that's why Satan hates the name Jesus, because He's been given the name...*which is above every name*. And there's coming a time in human history where every single tongue will acknowledge the name Jesus. They'll either do it volitionally, or it'll be coerced out of their mouth as they're in eternal retribution. So, the name of Jesus is a big deal. And Satan works in history to erase the name Jesus because of its power. It's kind of interesting as you look at the United States of America and you look at all the God talk and the culture, people will say, God.

Even sometimes not as profanity. They'll talk about God. They'll talk about spiritual things, God bless you. But introduce the name Jesus into the conversation, say the word Jesus, and watch the dynamics change. People don't like the name Jesus. God talk, spiritual talk, that's fine. But when you interject the name Jesus, it's different. That, by the way, is why they're trying to get rid of Merry Christmas. They want you to say Happy Holidays. Whenever someone says to you, Happy holidays, just come right back and say Merry Christmas. Christ-mass, right? Christ. He's the reason for the season. I've been in the checkout counters where people have done that Happy Holidays thing on me. And I've said to the young man or the young woman behind the checkout counter, well, Merry Christmas. And it's almost like they're kind of relieved that I said it. And they say back, oh yeah, Merry Christmas. It's like they're put under some kind of onus not to say Christmas, maybe it's a management thing, I don't know. But when you say back to them Merry Christmas, it's like they're relieved. And they say, Merry Christmas back. So, we're living in this kind of culture that wants to get rid of the name Christ, right down to His birthday. I mean, could you imagine having a birthday party for somebody and you never really invite the person whose birthday you're celebrating? Isn't that weird? That's kind of what Christmas is.

I mean, it's about family. It's about getting together. It's about presents-- all this kind of stuff. But what about Jesus? What about the name Jesus? What about the name Christmas? Because after all, He's the reason for the season. So, the Sadducees say-- here the high priest says, you've brought the guilt of this man upon us. They won't even use the name Jesus. And yet the name of Jesus is necessary for salvation. Because Peter explained in Acts 4:12, *And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other--* what's the next word there? *--name*. That's why the name is a big deal...*there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must--* meaning this is not optional...*by which we must be saved*. And yet these Sadducees won't even mention His name. They just call Him this man. And notice the high priest accuses the apostles; *[you] intend to bring this man's blood upon us*. No, you already did that yourself, because back in Matthew 27:25, the unbelieving Jews of Israel said, as they said to all the people, *"His blood shall be upon us and on our children!"* That's when they're saying, give us Barabbas instead of Jesus. His blood shall be upon us. So, when the high priest accuses the apostles, you're trying to bring the blood of this man

upon us-- I mean, I guess the response could have been, no, you've already done that to yourself. That's what you said back in Matthew 27:29.

- A. Apostles' Arrest (Acts 5:17-26)
- B. Apostles' Examination (Acts 5:27-33)
 - 1. Apostles brought in (27)
 - 2. High priest's accusations (28)
 - 3. **Apostles' response (29-32)**
 - 4. Sanhedrin's reaction (33)

So, the apostles are brought in. The high priest levels against the apostles two accusations. And now you see the apostles' response in verses 29 through 32. What are they saying in verse 29? Here's your key text on civil disobedience: *but Peter and the apostles answered-- speaking to the high priest, not a lightweight. "We **must [dei]** obey God rather than men."* Yeah, we know you gave us a command not to teach anymore in the name of Jesus, but you've forced us into a situation where we can either obey God or we can or obey you. And in this case, and like in all cases, we're putting our obedience to God above our obedience to you. You'll notice here it's the apostle Peter who's doing the speaking. Peter said, verse 29. That's what Jesus said He would make Peter into, a rock. Matthew 16:18, *"I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it."* "This rock" is Peter's confession. So, Jesus never built the church on Peter, contrary to Roman Catholicism. But the name He gave him was *Petros* (meaning little stone or little rock); that he would become a man of stability.

I mean, this is the guy that turned, that betrayed the Lord. He denied the Lord three times. And Jesus said, no, you're going to be a rock. And He made him into such a man of stability through the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit. Now the guy who has turned, denied the Lord three times-- and I think if I remember right the third time, he denied the Lord, it was to a servant girl who was probably about half his size and weight. That's how intimidated he was. Jesus said, no. You're going to be a rock, a little stone. And suddenly this guy has backbone to the point where he's now speaking to the high priest, which is a bigger threat than a little servant girl. And he says, no, I know you gave us an order, but we **must [dei]** obey God rather than men. That's what the Holy Spirit will do for people. Paul, writing to Timothy, tells us in Second Timothy 1:7 that

God...*has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.* Obviously, Peter is manifesting that. "We must obey God rather than men." I put the Greek expression for must in brackets there. And when you see that little Greek expression in Luke-Acts, it means "absolutely essential." It's used in Luke 4:43, the prequel, Luke wrote. *But he said--* referring to Jesus-- *"I must [dei] (that's the same Greek expression there that's used here in verse 29) preach the kingdom of God to the other cities, for I was sent for this purpose."* In Luke 24:44, it says: *Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all of the things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must [dei]--" that's the same Greek expression-- "be fulfilled."* Must means essential, not optional. So, when he says we **must** obey God rather than man, he is saying, it's absolutely essential that we do what God says instead of what you, the high priest, tell us to do. Because what did Jesus tell them to do? Acts 1:8, *"but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest parts of the earth."* That's our calling. And you're telling us not to preach anymore or teach anymore in the name of Jesus. So, I have a choice. I can either adhere to what you told us to do in Acts 4:17-18, or I can adhere to what Jesus told us to do in Acts 1:8. You put me into this position, and if you put me into this position, I must (absolutely essential) obey God rather than man.

So, what you see developing is the doctrine of civil disobedience. There are many examples of civil disobedience in the Bible. Not the least of which is Daniel chapters 3 and 6. Because when Daniel 3 and 6 took place, the nation of Israel was outside of their homeland, 350 miles in the east under first Nebuchadnezzar and then Darius. So, for the very first time, God's people, after 800 years of being in the land, were outside the land, under foreign dominion, under pagan rulers, and they were pushed into a situation where the pagans said, do (A) and God said, no do (B). And that's why it's the book of Daniel that develops the doctrine of civil disobedience, perhaps better than any other place in the Bible. Daniel 2 through 7 kind of functions-- it's all written in Aramaic. The rest of Daniel is written in Hebrew. But 2 through 7 is written in Aramaic, and it gives you a literary pattern. The stuff in chapter 2 is repeated in chapter 7, by way of theme. The stuff in chapter 3 is repeated in chapter 6. The stuff in chapter 4 is repeated in chapter 5. So, the civil disobedience chapters repeat in this chiastic structure. Chapter 3 and chapter 6. As you study Daniel 3 and Daniel 6, you'll

see civil disobedience. Chapter 3 deals with Nebuchadnezzar playing all the instruments after he created this giant statue, and he told everybody in the kingdom to bow down to it.

And Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said, we can't do that. Because the Pentateuch, the Decalogue, the first two commandments say no graven images and no gods before me. So, they said no to Nebuchadnezzar. Civil disobedience. Daniel 6 is the same situation. Civil disobedience; where a law was, under very sneaky terms, passed. And once a law is passed in the domain of the Medes and the Persians, it can't be revoked. Esther 8:8 says that. And so, it was passed by Daniel's enemies, who were jealous that he was rising up within the ranks there in Persia, after the Persians conquered the Babylonians. And they knew that they could get Daniel on a technicality or a law if it was passed, saying, you can't pray publicly. No public prayer. And Daniel chapter 6 says, Daniel, knowing that the law had been passed, got involved in public prayer. Because he prayed-- what was it? Three times a day towards Jerusalem in public. And they knew if they got this law passed, they could get Daniel into trouble. Daniel knew about the edict. He knew about the executive order, and he prayed anyway. So, Daniel 3 and Daniel 6 are chapters that start to outline the doctrine of civil disobedience that's expressed in Acts 5:29. We must obey God rather than man.

So I have-- and I'll conclude with this; I have four principles related to civil disobedience, which we have to start thinking about because we're now living under regimes here in the United States that are starting to pass executive orders that tell us to not do things; like go to church when God says to not forsake the assembling of yourselves together. Don't sing, when God inhabits the praises of His people. So finally, for the first time, at least in my lifetime, we're having to think very carefully about civil disobedience in the United States. We have a blueprint for it in the book of Daniel, because the Jews had to develop this doctrine of civil disobedience because they were outside their land under Nebuchadnezzar and Darius. So, the first principle is: there has to be a clear conflict between God's law and man's law. In Daniel 3, they were told to do something, worship idols, an idol that God said don't worship. And in Daniel 6, Daniel was told not to do something, which God told him to do; public prayer. So there has to be a clear conflict. It can't just be that I disagree with so-and-so. It has to be a scenario where God says, do something and the government says, don't do that. Or don't do

something that God says do. Don't go to church; God says, go to church. Don't sing in church; God inhabits the praises of His people.

So, there's a conflict now between man's law and God's law. I understand Romans 13, believe me. But Romans 13 does not resolve every issue. You can't just read Romans 13 by itself. You have to analyze these other cases to get the full council of God's Word. Number two: you have to exhaust all creative legal remedies. Meaning civil disobedience is a last resort rather than a first resort. Number three: you have to maintain respect for governing authorities when you're disobeying. You'll notice with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, whose Hebrew names were Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. You notice that they kept respectfully referring to Nebuchadnezzar as "O king" even though they were disobeying him. They weren't using crass terminology. They weren't calling him a loser. You know, they were still respectful to his office. And then the fourth principle is: if you disobey the state, you have to be willing to pay the cost. Because Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said to Nebuchadnezzar, if you throw us into the fire, God can rescue us. He's totally capable of rescuing us. But even if He doesn't rescue us, we're still not going to obey you. Now you know the rest of the story, how God, the fourth man in the fire, showed up. But as they're being thrown into the fire, they say God can rescue us. But even if He doesn't, we're still not going to obey you. And I think you'll find that language in Daniel 3:17, *"If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire, and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. (verse 18) But even if he does not, let it be known, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."* So, they were willing to pay the consequence.

So, the principles are (1) a clear conflict between God's law and man's law, (2) you have to exhaust creative remedies, meaning civil disobedience is a last resort, not a first resort. (3) You maintain respect for the government even as you're disobeying, and (4) you have to be willing to pay the cost. So, we are going to pick it up here with verse 30 next time, as the apostles now have a chance to present the Messiah to the high priest and the Sanhedrin.