

Acts 032
Presentation of the Messiah

Acts 5:30-33

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Open your Bibles to the book of Acts, chapter 5 and verse 30. This is our second to last study of the fall quarter. And Acts 5 is really a record of the church's second persecution. First persecution was in chapter 4, where they (the apostles) were put under a gag order not to teach any more in Jesus' name. It was the Sadducees and the Sanhedrin that put them under that gag order. Well, this time around, we're in Acts 5, we had a display of the church's power, verses 12 through 16. After the church was purified through the premature deaths of Ananias and Sapphira, verses 1 through 11. And that power in the church provoked jealousy on the part of the Sadducees. And so, they had the apostles arrested a second time.

II. Apostles' Persecution (Acts 5:17-42)

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)

C. Gamaliel's interruption & advice (34-39)

D. Results (40-42)

This time around, it's not just Peter and John being arrested, it's all the apostles. And so, this is going to lead to their flogging as we're going to see. I think in verse 40 they're ordered to be flogged. So that's the first time the church suffers physically. So, with the apostles' persecution, you can divide it up as follows. They're arrested, verses 17 through 26. Then the apostles are examined, that's the section we're in right now, verses 27 through 33. Then you're going to get a tremendous statement by a man named Gamaliel, verses 34 through 39, one of the Pharisees. And then the end result of it will be a flogging. And yet the apostles, after being flogged, left with joy, having been counted worthy to suffer for Christ. So, as the apostles are arrested, now they're being

examined by the Sanhedrin. The full Sanhedrin is present. The apostles are brought in, verse 27. The high priest raises accusations against the apostles, verse 28. And then in verses 29 through 32, you see the apostles' response. Every time they're persecuted and brought before the Sanhedrin publicly in this way, it gives them an opportunity to publicly testify to the truth of Jesus or Yeshua; a name that the Sadducees and the Pharisees don't even want to say out loud. You know they hate Christ so much. So, as we look at their response to the Sanhedrin after they're arrested, you see the tremendous statement.

B. Apostles' examination (27-33)

1. Apostles brought in (27)
2. High priest's accusations (28)
3. **Apostles' response (29-32)**
 - a) Necessity of civil disobedience (29)
 - b) Presentation of the Messiah (30-31)**
 - c) Witnesses (32)

We covered it last time. You see the tremendous statement by the apostles. "*We must obey God rather than men.*" So, if you're looking for justification for civil disobedience in some contexts-- when there's a conflict between man's law and God's law, verse 29 is a key verse on that. So, we covered that last time. And then in verses 30 and 31 they present the Messiah to the Jewish Sanhedrin. So, notice what they say there in verses 30 and 31, they say four things. Verse 30 says: "*The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross.*" Actually, the word for cross there is the Greek word for wood. You hung them on a piece of wood. Some of your English translations might say "you hung Him on a tree." Do some of your versions say that?

I heard a "yeah." Okay. What version are you using out of curiosity?

Okay, I'm reading from the New American Standard, but it says "cross."

So, King James says tree or wood, something like that.

So, the first thing they say to the Sanhedrin is, Jesus was the fulfillment of the covenants. That's what it means there when it says the God of our fathers. The God of the Jewish people, in other words, raised up Jesus. So, to the nation of Israel--as we're studying on Sunday mornings in the book of Genesis--was given the Abrahamic

Covenant. The Abrahamic Covenant promised to the Jewish people land, seed, and blessing. And when you have a chance to study all of that, all those covenants point ultimately towards Jesus. For example, Jesus is the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. He's the one that will bring in the eternal dynasty one day. And when you study Matthew chapter 1, you'll see there a genealogy linking Jesus back to David and ultimately back to Abraham. And it's Christmas time where we're thinking about the virgin birth. So, does the virgin birth take Jesus outside of the Davidic line? Because after all, Joseph was Jesus' legal father, but not biological father. No, it doesn't take Jesus outside of the Davidic line, because of the genealogy in Luke three, Mary's genealogy. This one here in Matthew chapter 1 is Joseph's genealogy. But Mary's genealogy also has David in that genealogy. So, the virgin birth, as wonderful as it is, did not disqualify Jesus from the Davidic promises because David is found in Joseph's genealogy and Mary's genealogy. So, it's an amazing thing that the Holy Spirit has done here with the virgin birth. How the virgin birth does not take Jesus out of the Davidic promises at all.

So, this is what it's talking about when the apostles are saying, *"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus."* This concept of "raised up" is a concept that the Jewish mind would understand very well. You see it all the way through the Book of Judges, as God is raising up different judges to deliver Israel. Judges 2:18 says, *When the Lord raised up judges for them...* So, in the book of Judges, God is raising up different judges to politically save Israel. And now that same language is applied to Jesus, Who, of course, is the ultimate Savior of the nation. So, these are the apostles under arrest. And that's what they're saying to the Sanhedrin. Jesus is the fulfillment of the covenants. And then and you can see why the Sanhedrin wanted these guys dead. If you look at 30: *"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you—"* that's the Jewish leadership, the apostles talking to the Jewish leadership. *"...whom you put to death by hanging Him on a cross."* Or some of your versions, say, "on a tree." So here the apostles blame Israel and her leadership for killing Christ. And we have to be careful with this one, as I'll explain in a minute. But there's no doubt that they shouldered some of the blame on the Jewish leadership.

Peter said the exact same thing at the end of his sermon in Acts 2. Speaking to the Jews, he says, [verse 23] *"this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you—"* speaking to the Jewish nation— *"nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death."* So, there's no doubt that Israel in the first

century shoulders much of the blame for the crucifixion of Jesus. They are the nation that rejected Him. However, the story is bigger than that because when you remember what the apostles said in Acts 4:27, they broadened the scope of the blame. They said there: *"For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod (who was an Edomite) and Pontius Pilate (who was a Roman), along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel."* So back in Acts chapter 4, they blame not just the peoples of Israel for the crucifixion of Jesus, not just Herod, but also Pontius Pilate, who was Roman and not Jewish. And then they blame the Gentiles. So, to this kind of age-old question, you know, who killed Christ? Was it the Jews or the Gentiles? And the answer is yes, it was both. There were Jewish culprits in the death of Jesus, and there were Gentile culprits in the death of Jesus. And to me, the whole discussion is sort of moot because Jesus died for the sins of the world. So, really all of us killed Christ. If you really want to blame someone, you know, we should look in the mirror because He died for all our sins.

But in this particular text in Acts 5, the apostles are pointing back at the Sanhedrin and saying, you know, you are responsible to some extent in the death of Christ. And then it says here you hung Him on a cross. You hung Him on a tree. You hung Him on a piece of wood. And that is language that goes back to Deuteronomy 21:22-23. It says: *"If a man has committed a sin worthy of death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his corpse shall not hang all night on the tree, but you shall surely bury him on the same day...so that you do not defile your land which the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance."* So, to be hung on a tree according to the Jewish law was to be treated as a common criminal. And that's what the Jewish nation did with Jesus by turning Him over to the Romans, ultimately for execution. This language that describes the cross as a tree, you'll see it in Galatians 3:13. Paul, quoting the Old Testament, says: *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having been a curse for us-- for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"--*

So, when they hung Him on a tree, so called, it's a sign of being cursed. It's a sign of being treated like a criminal in Judaism. But it was a good thing he hung on that tree, Paul says, because He bore our curse in our place, in so doing. Acts 10:39 refers to the cross as a tree in some English translations. I think it's the same word wood that's used in all of these. It says in Acts 10:39, *We are witnesses of all things he did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a*

cross-- or a tree. First Peter 2:24 uses the same Greek word that's used here, and it says: *and He himself bore our sins in His body on the cross (or tree), so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.* So here the apostles go under arrest. They have a chance to testify now to the fully assembled Sanhedrin. And this is what they wanted to communicate to them about Jesus. He's the fulfillment of Israel's covenants and you killed Him. It's basically what they're saying. But God took lemons and turned them into lemonade. Verse 31 is the description now of His exaltation. It says in verse 31, *"He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."*

So, the one that the Jewish nation executed, God the Father exalted. And there in verse 31 is a description where Jesus was exalted to. He was exalted to the Father's right hand. So, the right hand is always the place of honor. You remember Psalm 110:1? Of Jesus, ultimately it says, *"Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."* You might remember the sheep and goat judgment in the end times for the tribulation period survivors. The sheep are on the right. The goats are on the left. So, the right hand is a place of honor. So, when Jesus was killed and then He resurrected from the dead, and He ascended back to the Father, He did not go to the Father's left hand. He went to the Father's right hand, communicating it was a place of honor. So, what the world treated as a common criminal, God the Father turned it around and turned it to a position of honor and glory. And if you look at verse 31 very carefully, it calls Jesus the Prince. You might remember that the Apostle Peter in Acts 3:15 called Jesus the Prince. There, Peter said to the Jewish leadership: *"but put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact of which we are witnesses."*

So, you'll notice that Jesus is not called a king. He is called a Prince, and the reason He is not called a king here, is because the nation of Israel never enthroned Him as a king. In fact, the only crowns that He received was a crown of thorns, used to mock Him, but He never was coronated by the nation of Israel. And that's why His current position is not yet king. He's a lot like David was when David was fleeing from Saul. David was anointed as king. First Samuel 16 tells us that, but he did not rule as king until Saul was deposed. So, in the same way Jesus has been anointed as king. I mean, he's the King of kings and the Lord of Lords. But He is not currently reigning as king because there is an illegitimate usurper on the throne, a Saul-like entity called Satan

who has to be deposed first. So, when Psalm 110:1 says of Jesus, "*Sit at my right hand--*" a place of honor, no doubt-- "*until I make Your enemies [your] footstool.*" His enemies haven't been made His footstool yet because Satan hasn't been deposed. The deposing of Satan won't transpire until the events of the tribulation period, and then the coming of the Millennial Kingdom. But in the meantime, Jesus is not reigning on David's throne. Contrary to what modern day evangelicalism is now teaching through their Kingdom Now theology, that Jesus is now reigning on David's throne in a spiritual sense.

Reformed theology teaches this around the clock. The younger-- I mean, they were younger when I was there 20 years ago, I don't think they're that young anymore. But whatever they are, the generation of scholars that's at Dallas Seminary now, they're kind of into this Already, Not Yet mentality. Where, 'yeah He's reigning as king on David's throne, but He's going to reign even more on David's throne one day.' So, they say that the current age is not the church age. You know, it's not a period when David is fleeing from Saul. The church is reigning, but it will reign in an ultimate sense when Jesus returns. So, we at Sugar Land Bible Church do not teach Already, Not Yet theology. If we were to teach Already, Not Yet theology, we would go against our doctrinal statement. Our doctrinal statement and position statements, when you look at them, do not teach Already, Not Yet theology. Very sadly, those doctrinal statements and position statements are mirrored to some extent after Dallas seminaries doctrinal statement. So, whereas they are really not enforcing their doctrinal statement, we at Sugar Land Bible Church are for enforcing our doctrinal statement. And consequently, we do not believe that we are in the Kingdom. We believe that we are in the age of the church. We are not at home in this world.

We are kind of like David's mighty men, a rebel group. But it's not the kingdom. The kingdom won't manifest until Jesus returns at the end of the seven-year tribulation period, and takes His throne, His place on David's throne, which is a literal throne in Jerusalem. What He has right now in heaven is not David's throne, because David's throne is earthly, and Jesus is now in heaven. David's throne is terrestrial. What Jesus has now, which is a great place to be, a position of honor at the Father's right hand, is not to be confused with the Davidic throne. And people can play all kinds of games that they want to with Acts 2. We've gone through in our study in Acts some of their arguments. But Acts 2 does not teach that Jesus is reigning on David's throne. It teaches He's the Davidic heir. But His current position is not a position of king. It's the

position of Prince. Because He has to be coronated by the covenanted nation. That never happened. They rejected Him, turned Him over to Rome. The only crown He got was the crown of thorns. So, the rejection of Jesus by the Jewish nation is actually, even though they use their free will to rebel against Christ, when they used their free will to rebel against Christ, they were actually fulfilling God's Word.

Because Daniel in the famous prophecy of the seventy weeks, 600 years before the First Coming predicted: [Daniel 9:26] *Then after the sixty-two weeks--* and that takes you right to Palm Sunday when you work that out mathematically. *Then after the sixty-two weeks, the Messiah will be cut off--* see that? *--and have nothing.* What does it mean, “have nothing”? He will not inherit, in His first coming anyway, His long-awaited kingdom. Which is a tragic thing when you think about it. Here, Jesus showed up on schedule, on time, in fulfillment of countless prophecies. And they said thanks, but no thanks. And they rejected Him, and they turned Him over to Rome for crucifixion. And the moment they did that through their own free will, they were actually fulfilling God's Word that the Messiah would come and be cut off and have nothing. This is why He is referred to in this prophecy as the Prince who is to come. You'll see that in Daniel 9:25. He's not the King, He's the Prince. He's the Prince who is to come. Well, what makes him the King? The nation of Israel has to get their act together and enthrone the king on the king's terms. Once that happens, then He'll be functioning as king. So, one of the things you have to get straight in your doctrine of Christ, is Christ's three offices. And if you don't get those straight, you'll be confused your whole Christian life trying to figure out what is Jesus doing now and what's happening today.

He has three offices: prophet, priest, and king. He was prophet in His first coming because He functioned like all the other prophets, calling Israel to repentance. It's what all the prophets essentially did. But when the nation of Israel wouldn't repent and Jesus died, He rose from the dead, and then He ascended back to the Father's right hand and He took on His second office, sometimes called His present session. Not related at all to his Davidic kingship, but His present session, where He is now functioning as priest. And you say, well, Pastor, do you have a good book on this that would explain the present session of Christ in His high priestly ministry from the Father's right hand? Because he's not functioning as king from David's throne, He's functioning as priest. Do you have a good book on that? Yes, I do, it's called the Book of Hebrews. The whole book of Hebrews is basically an explanation of His current ministry to us as high priest,

not after the Order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedek. So, it's a higher priesthood than Aaron's priesthood of the Old Testament. That's what Jesus is doing now. It's called His present session. And people today are always trying to intermingle that with some spiritual kingdom. And it's not a spiritual kingdom. You have to understand it as His present session, a place of honor, a place of glory, a place where He's doing an awful lot.

You know, one of the things He's doing for us right now is He's praying for us. Hebrews 7 talks about that. I mean, aren't you glad for that? That He's praying for you? So, there's about seven, eight, nine, ten-- if I remember right --list of things He does currently is priest. But it's not connected to His kingship. But one of these days, at the end of the tribulation period, the nation of Israel will be saved from the beast and also regenerated. Ezekiel 36, Ezekiel 37, Zechariah 12, Zechariah 14, Romans 11. Countless passages talk about it. And once they're saved in that sense, they will call Him back to the earth. And He will physically leave His present session at the Father's right hand and physically return to the earth. The physicality of His coming will be just as real as His first coming. Because the prophet Zechariah says his feet-- aren't feet physical? His feet are going to touch, uh, the Himalayas? No. His feet are going to touch Mount of Olives. Mount of Olives is going to split. So that's physical. The Mount of Olives is always literal. And feet of Jesus are always literal. And His feet are going to touch the Mount of Olives. And the Mount of Olives is going to split. He'll take His seat on David's throne. He will depose in the abyss a Saul-like entity called Satan. And then He'll rule the world for a thousand years. And then after the thousand years, the thousand years will merge into the millennium. So, it's not until the thousand years start that He's functioning as King. And there He does a bunch of other stuff that he's never done before. Such as bring perfect harmony to the world, perfect peace to the world. If you're looking for social justice, you're going to get it there. In perfection, He will rule the world with a rod of iron and all those passages. And that's His position as king. So, this is why Peter calls Jesus here the Prince. He is the one to whom God exalted to His right hand as Prince and Savior. Why is He prince and not king? Because you people, the Sanhedrin, you rejected Jesus.

So, who is Jesus? You might have a Jewish person in your life that's wrestling with these kinds of messianic ideas. They might want to know your definition of who Jesus is. This is a great four-point outline to talk them through. He's the fulfillment of

Israel's covenants. He is someone that the leadership of first-century Israel killed. He was subsequently exalted to His present session at the Father's right hand, where He is not functioning as king, but as priest. And then at the end of verse 31, you have His purpose. He is a savior to grant repentance to Israel and the forgiveness of sins.

- 3. Apostles' Response (Acts 5:29-32)
 - a) Necessity of civil disobedience (29)
 - b) **Presentation of the Messiah (30-31)**
 - i. Fulfillment of the Covenants (30a)
 - ii. Death (30b)
 - iii. Exaltation (31a)
 - iv. **Messiah's purpose (31b)**

So, what is His purpose? His purpose is ultimately to convert the nation of Israel. Acts 3:19-21, explains what Israel has to do to bring in these millennial conditions. You might remember we were studying that; Peter was speaking. He says, *"Therefore repent-- speaking to the Jewish nation --and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time."* This is the meaning of Matthew 23:37-39. Very end of Matthew 23, Jesus says to the Jewish nation: *"Jerusalem, Jerusalem,"* so He's clearly speaking to the Jewish nation, *"[you] who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather [episynago] your--"* that's the word for synagogue. Gather, *episynago*. *"How I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling."* So, the problem wasn't me. The problem was you. *"Behold, your house (their temple) is being left to you desolate! [Verse 39] For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me--"*

And I'm sure glad there's an "until" there, because if He said to them, you will not see Me, and the verse stopped there, we might as well just throw out all the Israel stuff. There is no future for Israel. Let's just teach hardcore replacement theology. That's what you'd have to do, you know; the church has replaced Israel. The church is the kingdom of God on the earth. That's what you'd have to do if the verse stopped with the word

"Me." But it doesn't stop with the word "Me." There's an "until." So, there's a condition. *"For I say to you...you will not see Me until you--"* a collective you, speaking of the nation as a whole *"--until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'"* Which is Psalm 118:26. And what He's saying there is, I'm not coming back for this nation until this nation nationally acknowledges Me as the Messiah. And you say, well, pastor, I want more information on when that acknowledgment is going to happen? And I'm glad you asked, because Matthew 23 is followed by Matthew 24 which is the explanation of how it's going to happen. They're going to have to pass through the 70th week. Not us the church, but Israel. And as they go through the crisis of the 70th week-- of Daniel, the seven-year tribulation period--by the time it's all said and done, they will be a believing nation. They will call Him back to the earth, He will gather them.

Matthew 24:31 uses the same word *episynagō*. The synagogue I wanted to have with you in my first coming will have to wait till the second coming because you never acknowledged Me as the king. The only crown I got out of that was a mockery. A crown of thorns. But God turned lemons into lemonade because through that transaction, the sin debt of the world was paid for. And you and I are saved right now because of this miscarriage of justice. So, you kind of read this and say, what a tragedy it happened this way. Well for us, it's a victory. Because this is how-- this is why Paul said, he who became a curse-- who was hung on a tree, actually absorbed our curse. So, this is how God got the whole job done. And that's why Jesus' purpose, if you look at verse 31, is He is a prince and a savior. So, through all of this, the sin debt of the world was paid for. His final words on the cross were "It is finished." The sin debt of the world has been paid for, and now I, through simply exercising faith in Him, can be made right with the God that made me. And so, His-- although He's currently a prince, He's still my savior. But ultimately, He's going to grant repentance to Israel and the forgiveness of their sins. He's going to bring Israel, one day, completely and totally back into the fold.

So that'll preach, folks. Share that with your Jewish friends or anybody that's wrestling with messianic questions. Who is Jesus? He's the fulfillment of the covenants. He is the one that Israel rejected, and He died. He consequently has been exalted to the Father's right hand where He is pursuing His present session. But He is also fulfilling His ultimate purpose of being our Savior and one day, all of Israel's Savior. And once that happens, He will transition from His high priestly ministry into His regal ministry, where He's functioning as king. Prophet, first coming. Priest, currently. King, Second

Coming. And Peter-- I think it is Peter speaking, but he's representing all the apostles here. He now gives the witnesses to these things. The witnesses are in verse 32, *"And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."* So, this exchange that's happening here, where the apostles are speaking to the Sanhedrin, ends with the witnesses. Who are the witnesses to all these things spoken of earlier? Well, the first group of witnesses is the apostles themselves. He says, here *"we are witnesses."* Who's the we? Us apostles. So, the wonderful thing about the Bible is it set up on the testimony of eyewitnesses. Any attorney will tell you that the most powerful evidence you could ever introduce in a court of law is eye witness testimony. That's potent, powerful evidence. And the apostles here are setting themselves up as eyewitnesses to the things of Jesus Christ.

Ah, didn't they say something like that back in Acts 1? It's also in Second Peter 1 (verse 16), where he says, we did not follow cleverly devised tales, but we are eyewitnesses of these things. Jesus showing them infallible proofs. And then the apostles are eyewitnesses to these things. They had been with Him for three years. They saw everything He did, heard everything He taught. Paul the Apostle, concerning the eyewitnesses of the apostles, says in First Corinthians 15:5-7, in Christ's resurrection *that He (Jesus) appeared to Cephas-- that's Peter-- then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep.* So, He appeared to about five hundred people. You know, a few have died, so maybe the number went down to 495 or something. But he says those folks are still alive. Why don't you go ask him? That's powerful testimony right there. Do you think the Corinthian letter would have ever gotten off the ground if they could talk to those 495 and they said, 'nah, it never happened.' I mean, if I wrote a book today that said John F Kennedy was killed of natural causes, do you think my book would do very well?

No, because there's eyewitnesses that saw Kennedy, of course with video, many eyewitnesses that saw how Kennedy was killed. So, if I write a book saying Kennedy died in a way that's different than what the eyewitnesses said, then the book would never have any credibility. First Corinthians would have never been transferred from generation A to generation B if the people that Paul is writing to went and talked to these alleged eyewitnesses-- around five hundred of them, although some have died-- and they said, 'oh, no, it never happened that way.' They said, yeah, it did. We saw

Jesus risen in His body. So, Paul says, *He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain [alive] until now, [although] some have fallen asleep; then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.* So that's what Peter here and the apostles are getting at when they tell the Sanhedrin, *"we are eyewitnesses to these things."* And one of the things about an eyewitness is you have to figure out, is their testimony credible? Or are they sort of a proven liar or a flaky type of person? I believe that these eyewitnesses are extremely credible. Because they all went to their deaths believing this truth about Jesus. I mean, only a fool would die for a known lie.

So, this is why lawyers like Frank Morrison, who wrote the book called *Who Moved the Stone*. Simon Greenleaf, who was a professor of evidence, I believe, at Harvard Law School, was sort of challenged by his students to taking the rules of evidence and applying them to the resurrection. The legal rules of evidence. That's why people like Frank Morrison and Simon Greenleaf got saved. Because they figured out that what this book is teaching is more powerful than any argument they had ever made in a court of law. Because the whole Bible is set up on this eyewitness testimony. So, what happened to these eyewitnesses? You can read about it in Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* and other sources, kind of piecing together extra biblical tradition concerning how all these guys died. James, the son of Alphaeus was clubbed to death. Simon the Zealot was martyred. James, the son of Zebedee, was executed. You can actually read; we're going to read about his execution in Acts 12. Thaddeus was burned to death. Peter was, best we know, crucified upside down. Matthew was beheaded. And the middle column is where all these guys went as they went out into all nations. As the Lord told them to preach the gospel to every nation. John, you know what happened to him. They tried to boil him to death. Very stubborn guy, by the way, John. He wouldn't die. And so, they took him in the reign of Domitian. He's about 90. Here's this 90-year-old guy that won't die. Because remember what Jesus said about John? If I want him to remain alive till I come, what business is that is yours? Remember that?

God had a purpose for John to be put-- which fits everything with what we know with extra biblical material of the time of Domitian. Nero would just cut your head off. Domitian, who followed Nero down the road a bit as a Roman emperor would, would put people out into islands as a kind of solitary confinement. And the reason John really didn't get along well with the Roman government is they had him labeled as a domestic

terrorist. And I'm not kidding about that, because John kept talking about the coming kingdom. And Rome hated that because we're the kingdom. So, what got John in trouble was he believed in a coming. He was a premillennial guy. And so, they said, well, you're a domestic terrorist. So, we're going to put you in solitary confinement. We're going to use the Roman version of the Patriot Act or whatever they had, and they just took the guy. He wouldn't die, and they put him on this island. And yet he was exactly where he was supposed to be, because it's on that island he received the vision that we now call the Book of Revelation. Philip was tortured and crucified. Thomas went to India, and he was speared to death. Bartholomew was flayed and crucified. Flayed is horrific. It deals with the tearing off of your skin. Andrew was hanged.

So, when these guys are talking to us, I have a tendency to believe what they're saying. Because it just doesn't make sense to me how all 12 of them would lie. And then die for a lie. I mean, nobody dies for a known lie. So, I think what they were saying was true. So, Simon Greenlee, Frank Morrison. Kind of a more modern version would be Josh McDowell. Apologists have looked into things like this, and they said, well, I've got to become a Christian because there's just too much evidence here. And if I don't become a Christian, I'm intellectually dishonest because there's more evidence for Christianity than there is for any other argument I've ever made, you know, before a jury. So that's what he means here when he says, *"And we are witnesses of these things."* Now, who else is a witness? *"so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."* The Holy Spirit, the eternally existent third member of the Godhead. The Holy Spirit is also a witness to these things. What did Jesus say in the upper room? John 15:26-27. *"When the helper comes, whom I will send to you from the father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will testify--"* that's witness, right? *"He will testify about Me, and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning."*

So, there's your two witnesses. Number one, the apostles. *"We are witnesses of these things,"* verse 32a. The second witness is the Holy Spirit himself, verse 32b. Now let's defuse something here. *"and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."* Uh oh. That contradicts our doctrine of grace, doesn't it? Pastor, you say over and over again, we're saved through faith alone in Christ alone. But here my Bible says we're saved through obeying Jesus. Well, obeying Him to do what? Obedience is putting your faith in Him. That's what He commanded us to do. So, I'm

understanding verse 32 through the lens of John 3:36. *"[The one] who believes in the Son has eternal life; but [the one] who does not obey the son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."* What does it mean? The one who does not obey. The one who does not obey-- the command to do the first word underlined, which is believe. Jesus says, believe. Now when I put my faith in Him, I obeyed His command. If I choose not to put my faith in Him, I have disobeyed His command. So, this becomes very important because we have within human nature, a desire to do work salvation. I mean, the gospel can't be that easy. It can't be this easy. Let me do some kind of work. Let me fill out a card. Let me give money.

Let me walk an aisle. Let me cry crocodile tears. Let me crawl over some broken glass. Let me make some New Year's resolutions, most of which you'll have already broken by February anyway. Let me do something, because it's the pride within human beings where we want to somehow contribute to salvation. So, people with that work salvation mindset come to this word obey, and they try to front load into it all of their works that they have to do to be justified before God. Yet, these verses aren't talking about human works. They're talking about obeying his command to believe. That's what it's talking about. And once you obey his command to believe, what happens to your life? You're given the Holy Spirit, right? Who was the second witness? First Corinthians 6:19, *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who was in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?* Romans 8:9, *However, you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.* Ephesians 4:30, *do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.* So, once you obey Him by believing, then there's a reciprocal promise that He will put inside of you that second witness, which is the Holy Spirit, who will be with you forever.

John 14:16-17, *I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever.* Well, who's the helper? Glad you asked. Verse [17], *that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.* That's the reciprocal promise. So that's quite a sermon to the Sanhedrin. And so, they said 'Yay! Great sermon.' Oh, I'm sorry they didn't say that did they? Verse 33. And we'll end here with verse 33. *But when they--* that's the Sanhedrin--*heard this, they were cut to the*

quick and intended to kill them. Uh, what does it mean? Cut to the quick. It means conviction. They were convicted as to the veracity of the words of the apostles. That's what Jesus said would happen right? When He talked about the Holy Spirit. [John 16:8] *And when He comes, He will convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment.* Sin, because they don't believe in me. Righteousness because I go to the Father and you no longer see me. And concerning judgment because the ruler of this world has already been judged.

Jesus talked about the convicting ministry of the Spirit. When Peter finished preaching in Acts 2. It says in verse 37, *Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"* That's the ministry of the Spirit. It will convict you of your need to trust Christ for salvation. The Spirit won't believe for you. But He will sure make your life is miserable until you do. That's what we call the convicting ministry. So, this is what the Sanhedrin is under. Now, when you're under conviction, you do one of two things. You either submit and follow through with the conviction or you suppress it-- if you make a decision to suppress it, typically that suppression manifests itself as uncontrolled anger and rage. And you need to understand this because you're going to share the gospel with people at your place of business or in your members of your family, particularly holiday time. Lots of extended family around, and you're going to share the gospel with people, and they're just going to get flat out mad at you. And when they get angry at you and call you every name in the book. You know, you're narrow, you're bigoted. You know, you guys know the whole litany. You just say to yourself, well, praise the Lord. They're under conviction. Because that's what happens when people are under conviction, and they suppress it. They get mad. So that's what's happening with the Sanhedrin. Verse 33, *when they heard this, they were cut to the quick and intended to kill them.* Um, this is what religion does. It always tries to kill. Remember the first act of religion in the Bible?

Probably the second act really. Cain approached God his own way. Not through blood sacrifice. He had a Frank Sinatra theology. I did it my way. [Genesis 4:4] The Lord God had regard for Abel and His offering; but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So, Cain became angry-- see that? That's what religion always does. It's angry at the person that has access to God. Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. First John 3:12, I think it is, says *not as Cain, who was of the evil one and [murdered] his brother.* People that are under conviction typically get angry. Remember

when Nathan confronted David and told him a parable about somebody that was on a power trip? Remember David's reaction? Second Samuel 12:5. *Then David's anger burned greatly...and he said to Nathan, "As the Lord lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die."* Until Nathan said, uh, you're the guy. I'm just giving you some examples where people that are under conviction, you know, typically get angry.

So, they wanted them dead because that was the penalty for disobeying the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin had told them not to teach anymore in the name of Jesus. The apostles, through civil disobedience, broke that Sanhedrin's command. And so, they wanted them dead for that reason. But the ultimate reason they wanted them dead is they were just very, very angry because they were under conviction, because they were taking the Spirit's convicting ministry and suppressing it, which typically results in rage. And remember, where is Jesus right now as this is going on? At the Father's right hand. And He is living out His ministry through His apostles. They did the exact same thing to Jesus. They tried to kill Him all the time. In John 8:58. It says, *Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."* He's claiming a divine title. The divine title. [verse 59] *Therefore they--that's the Jewish people--picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.* So, people are trying to kill Jesus constantly. So as Jesus, now at the Father's right hand, is living out His ministry through the apostles, they're creating this same animosity wherever they go. There's people that listen to them, don't like what they're saying, respond to the convicting ministry through suppression, move into rage and what these guys did. Now they have a legal reason. They think the Sanhedrin's law was broken, but the ultimate reason is they're just flat out angry. And the problem isn't the apostles. The problem is the Sanhedrin that wouldn't respond to the convicting ministry of the spirit. I mean, everything Jesus did, they tried to kill over and over again.

Remember His seventh--I think it is--miracle in John's gospel? John 11. Remember when he brought Lazarus out of the grave? Do you remember the reaction of the Pharisees to that? The next chapter says, [John 12:10] *But the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death also.* Not only do we got to kill Jesus, but we also got to kill the guy that he just brought back from the dead. It's just amazing to me. Rather than, 'Praise the Lord! A guy who's been brought back from the dead!' it's 'We got to figure out a way to kill this guy and put him back in the grave.' I mean, that's the pharisaical religious spirit right there. So that's their rage. And at this point, a very wise Pharisee

speaks up named Gamaliel, who happened to be Paul's teacher. And says something very, very interesting that I think ministered to Theophilus, who received this book in Rome. So, we'll pick that up next time right there in verse 34 and try to finish the chapter next week.