

Him be **bles**ed with the forgiveness of his sins, **bles**ed with eternal life, for He was sent ... *to bles*s you, *in turning away every one of you from his iniquities*.

Peter's closing words of his second sermon are again found in ACTS 3:26 *Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bles*s you, *in turning away every one of you from his iniquities*. This is the only time we find the word "**bles**s" recorded in the book of ACTS. And if you really think about it ACTS 3:26 really gives a good definition on what "**bles**s" means. ...*God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bles*s you, *in turning away every one of you from his iniquities*.

ACTS 4

Keep in mind we are studying about Luke, and what was revealed unto him by interviewing eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word from the time when the birth of John the Baptist was announced in LUKE 1 until Paul was prisoner in Rome for two years in ACTS 28. About sixty-five years of time are recorded in Luke's to New Testament records of The Gospel According to LUKE, and The ACTS. Luke wasn't present during the events we have studied thus far in both LUKE and ACTS. Luke will first himself be noted as an eyewitness in ACTS 16. With this in mind then we know the Holy Ghost prompted Luke to write down in a chronological order what took place during the early days of the Church Age, which began on the day of Pentecost in ACTS 2. We have now examined Peter's first two Holy Ghost inspired sermons, and in ACTS 4 we find the result of what happened after Peter's second sermon.

Before we continue examining the working of the Holy Ghost in the lives of the Apostles that Luke chronicles in ACTS, let's review some historical facts that will help our understanding of the scriptures going forward. We have read, and will read some more about the events surrounding the temple in Jerusalem, where we find the Apostles, and their followers gathering. The Temple city where Jesus and His fellow Jews worshipped was within the walled city of Jerusalem. And the walled city of Jerusalem proper in that day was a little over two hundred acres, and had a population of around 27,000 people. All of the action found in ACTS 1-7 takes place in Jerusalem, and a lot of the action found in ACTS chapters 3-7 takes place in or around the temple of Jerusalem.

As we continue looking at what Luke wrote starting in ACTS 4 we will find several references to the Jewish council at Jerusalem. This council was the Jewish Sanhedrin, though never called by this name in scripture. The Sanhedrin is thought to have originated in the third century before Christ, and was the recognized headship of the Jewish people in the days of Christ and the Apostles. This Sanhedrin council consisted of Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, priests and elders, and numbered somewhere between 70 and 72 men. In the Sanhedrin council it was the usual custom to have one High Priest named as its president. During a Sanhedrin council vote, one of the Scribes would keep a register of the votes for acquittal, while another Scribe would register the votes of condemnation. They tried cases of idolatry and false prophets. Their authority only extended over the Jews. The Sanhedrin was allowed to exist under Roman rule, but their power was limited. They could find a person guilty and give the death sentence, but they could not carry it out. Only the Romans could put a person to death. We have read the record of the Roman governor Pilate being willing to let Jesus go, but those of the Sanhedrin council persuaded Pilate to allow Jesus to be crucified. When the Sanhedrin council had Stephen stoned to death in ACTS 7 we find the Sanhedrin council in violation of their own law, which is found in JOHN 18:31 *...It is not lawful for us to put any man to death*. In ACTS 4 and 5 we find Peter and John arrested twice by the Sanhedrin council, which basically was the very same individuals that Jesus appeared before.

With this background in mind, let's continue our study. ACTS 4:1 *And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, 2 Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide. 4*

Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.

Before we dive into the depths of what is written in ACTS 4, keep the following in mind. We find here in ACTS 4:3 that Peter and John were essentially arrested here, but apparently also taken into their custody was the lame man who was healed! We note this because of what is stated in ACTS 4:14 *And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.* Recall in ACTS 3:11 before Peter preached his second impromptu sermon that the healed lame man “held Peter and John,” and I doubt that in the days following his healing that the lame man didn’t let Peter or John out of his sight. Also note in ACTS 4:4 that about five thousand of the men of Israel, who heard Peter’s second sermon, became believers, making now about eight thousand plus being added to the early church that was now founded at Jerusalem since the day of Pentecost. These next three chapters of ACTS are packed full of facts concerning this growing church at Jerusalem. From the history we looked at above it appears that about a third of those in Jerusalem were now believers in Jesus Christ, that is they were saved! Praise the Lord! They all knew the facts of ACTS 3:26 *Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.*

In ACTS 4:1 we find that as Peter and John spoke to the people about this healing of the lame man, that *...the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them.* This group of priests, and Sadducees, and the captain of the temple were drawn to the commotion surrounding the lame man being healed, and the subsequent sermon by Peter. The captain of the temple was essentially the temple police, whose duty it was to preserve order, and prevent any undo commotion, or riot. The healing of the lame man in chapter 3 had created quite a commotion, with all the people running together to see what had happened, and certainly this caught the attention of the captain of the temple. The captain of the temple quickly got the priests, and the Sadducees to go with him to apprehend Peter and John. No doubt part of this group of Sadducees and priests were members of the Sanhedrin. To my way of thinking it was the Sadducees who initiated the arrest of Peter and John here in ACTS 4:1-3.

The Sadducees came into existence about 200 B.C. The Sadducees doctrine was that the soul and body perish together. They did not believe in angels nor did they believe in the resurrection. ACTS 23:8 summarizes their doctrine this way: *For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.* The Sadducees had pestered Jesus about the resurrection, in which they didn’t believe, in MATTHEW 22:23-34, where is recorded He put them to silence. The same account is also recorded in MARK 12:18-27, and in LUKE 20:27-38. The Sadducees doctrine had few followers, but those that were of this sect were also of the highest rank in Jewish society for they were very wealthy and influential coming from a mix of high priests, aristocratic families, and merchants – the wealthier mix of the Jewish population. The Sadducees are also recorded in history as being a haughty bunch, and displayed a willingness to compromise with the Roman rulers, which actions aroused the hatred of the common people. Those of the Sadducees believed in parts of the written law of Moses, but only the parts that agreed with their doctrine, and they denied the oral law of Moses, which the Scribes and Pharisees passed on from one generation to another. They were a priestly clique, but at the same time avowedly irreligious, and most certainly worldly minded. Because of their wealth they controlled the Sanhedrin. The Sadducees lives and political authority were so intimately bound up with the Temple, and Temple worship that after the Romans destroyed the Temple in 70 A.D. the Sadducees ceased to exist as a group, and further mention of them quickly disappeared in history. Thus we find the Sadducees were allowed by God to exist as an authority for less than three hundred years according to history.

Think about this: we don’t find Pharaohs being in authority any more, nor do we find the Philistines being around either, but God created them, and brought them into power when He did for a purpose, and when God had accomplished His purpose, these rulers, these people, these powers, these so-called authorities ceased to exist, just like the Sadducees. There are several scriptures in the Bible that highlight the fact that God is always in control. We read in DANIEL 4:17 this statement:

...that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men. Basest means even the lowest of men. DANIEL 4:25 concludes with this similar thought: *...the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.* DANIEL 4:32, and DANIEL 5:21 repeats this same thought. God gave to the kingdom of men at the time He chose the likes of the Pharaohs, and the Philistines, and the Sadducees for the purpose of their accomplishing God's will. There was a Pharaoh that promoted Joseph to the second highest place in Egypt, and that was God's will at that time for Joseph was used to provide for, and preserve the children of Israel. There was another Pharaoh who raised Moses, and taught him the ways of Egypt. That too was God's will for Moses was in training him for a later time to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt back to their promised land. Forty years later there was yet another Pharaoh who opposed Moses, and the children of Israel, and Pharaoh's opposition to God's chosen people is what God used to show Himself mighty, and to be the Deliverer of Israel. Likewise the Philistines were used of God to teach Israel lessons in overcoming. AMOS 1:8 tells of their demise, stating in part *...and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish, saith the Lord GOD.* During the time of Jesus and the Apostles the Sadducees were allowed to be a part of the Jewish Sanhedrin council, and to be instrumental in condemning Jesus to death, and be against the things of God in the lives of the Apostles, including Paul. The Sadducees didn't know it, but they were on a short leash controlled by God, for again as DANIEL 4:25 concludes *...the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.*

Much of the Bible is written to show us how to be an overcomer. Overcomers have things, or people brought into our lives to prove that through Christ *...we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us...* ...ROMANS 8:37. Study 2 CORINTHIANS 12, and see how much Paul enjoyed having a thorn in the flesh. He didn't like this trial, and sought the Lord thrice to be delivered from it. The Lord didn't allow this thorn to depart from Paul, but the Lord encouraged Paul by instructing him, saying: *"My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness..."* 2 CORINTHIANS 12:9. This thorn in Paul's flesh was one of many things God brought into Paul's life to bring him to the place of a full overcomer. In order for any of us to be made perfect, and be found a full overcomer we need to learn these truths in our own life. I hope we all truly appreciate how much God loves us, and how *...we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose...* according to ROMANS 8:28. The best response we can have for our appreciation of God's great love for us is found in 1 THESSALONIANS 5:18 *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.* In other words do we truly appreciate the persons, (the Pharaoh's, the Philistines, and the Sadducees) or the other things (the thorns in our flesh, the tests and trials) that come into our lives that we need to get a victory over in order to be a full overcomer? The darkest of times brought forth the heroes of faith, the Old Testament full overcomers. A partial list of the Old Testament overcomers is found in HEBREWS 11. They all had one thing in common, which is also recorded in HEBREWS 11. They all lived their lives by faith, something that truly pleases God, and God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him, a fact found in HEBREWS 11:6. HEBREWS 11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Are we truly thankful that the Lord loves us so much to bring heavy tests, and trials into our lives? His purpose in doing so is to give us God's best, and God's best is Christ Jesus Himself! The Bride of Christ will be a full overcomer, will know that all things in their life were given them for the purpose of helping them achieve God's best, and she will truly be thankful in every thing. Old Testament worthy of faith David concluded PSALMS 30 with these words found in verse 12: *O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.* The Bride of Christ is found in REVELATION 4:9 to be a leader in giving *...glory and honour and thanks to Him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever.*

Back to ACTS 4, the Sadducees here in ACTS 4 were upset with what Peter said, for Peter twice in his second sermon recorded in ACTS 3 made mention of Jesus resurrection, and they didn't believe in the resurrection. In ACTS 3:15 Peter stated that you men of Israel, and your rulers *...killed*

the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. Again in his concluding sentence recorded in ACTS 3:26 Peter again stated: *Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.* Hearing about Christ Jesus, the Prince of Life, whom they crucified a few months before being raised from the dead certainly upset the Sadducees, which is why we read in ACTS 4:2 that they *...Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.* {We are going to find the name of Jesus mentioned seven times in ACTS 4, which speaks of the SPIRITUAL PERFECTION of Jesus. Three times in ACTS 4, (verses 2, 10, and 33) we read of the resurrection of Jesus, and again the number three is a number that points to RESURRECTION.} The very mention of the fact that God raised Jesus from the dead pushed the Sadducees over the edge, thus *...the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon...* Peter and John, the lame man being with them, *...And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide...* ACTS 4:1 & 3. Apparently it was not appropriate to assemble the Jewish Sanhedrin council at night, which, if this was a rule, they obviously violated it in the case of their trial of Jesus.

ACTS 4:4 tells the results of Peter's second sermon, which no doubt happened just prior to Peter and John being arrested. ACTS 4:4 *Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.* There are seven "heard the word" verses of scripture in the Bible, seven being the number of SPIRITUAL PERFECTION, or SPIRITUAL COMPLETION. Here we find that *...many of them which heard the word believed...* . Those, which truly "heard the word," were the men of Israel Peter addressed from Solomon's porch in ACTS 3.

We must also note that not all of them believed, but *...many of them which heard the word believed...* . Some of those that heard Peter's sermon of ACTS 3 were obviously members of the Sanhedrin, who were attracted to the commotion surrounding the healing of the lame man, and ACTS 4:2 highlights that they *...Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.* Obviously these rulers, many being Sadducees, didn't believe the word of truth that Peter preached, and as we noted above they certainly didn't believe in the resurrection of Jesus. I think it is also important to point out here that not one time in scripture do we ever read of a Sadducee getting saved. Again we reference what the Apostle Paul wrote in ROMANS 10:9 & 10, which is a template for anyone becoming a believer. ROMANS 10:9 *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* 10 *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* Furthermore recall also that the Sanhedrin council consisted of Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, priests and elders, and numbered somewhere between 70 and 72 men. We do read of one famous Pharisee getting saved, and that being Saul of Tarsus, who became our Apostle Paul, the one who wrote the scripture in ROMANS 10 we just read. However as a collective group I think we find the majority of the Sanhedrin council as being composed of unbelievers.

With these facts in mind we find the next portion of ACTS 4 dealing with Peter and John being brought before the Sanhedrin council, the very same men who had Jesus crucified.

ACTS 4:5 *And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, 6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, 9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; 10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. 11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. 12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. 13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. 14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say*

nothing against it. 15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, 16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. 17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. 18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. 21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done. 22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

Let's look at these verses a little closer. ACTS 4:5 *And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, 6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?* History records that Annas was probably at one time the president of the Sanhedrin, and that he had five sons who were also high priests. Caiaphas was another high priest, who also is noted to be the president of the Sanhedrin council at the time of Jesus appearance before him in MATTHEW 26, and JOHN 18. The John and Alexander mentioned here were kinsman of Annas the high priests, and Alexander is thought to have held the title of governor of the Jews. The short version is that those mentioned in ACTS 4:5 & 6 were the members of the Jewish Sanhedrin council, who Peter and John were brought before. These Sanhedrin rulers perceived themselves as being the one's in power.

In ACTS 4:7, after thinking about it all night, *...they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?* At first glance, on the surface, this seems like a really dumb question. However as we will now see, there was tremendous wisdom give Luke by the Holy Ghost to record this question. As we examine this question we find who was behind the Sanhedrin councils actions.

Who was behind the very first question asked in scripture? The first question found in scripture is in GENESIS 3:1, and it was Satan in the form of a serpent who asked Eve, *...Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?* This apparently simple question brought about the loss of man's innocence forever. We find in REVELATION 12:9 and 20:2 that that old serpent, which is called the Devil, is none other than Satan, which deceiveth the whole world. Jesus told who Satan was in JOHN 8:44 *...He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.* Satan is called by many names in scripture, and one of them is Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. {See MATTHEW 12:24, and MARK 3:22.} Satan is called "the prince of this world" in JOHN 12:31; 14:30; and 16:11. In EPHESIANS 2:2 Satan is noted to be *"...the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience."* The Greek word translated power here in EPHESIANS 2:2 is exousia {ex-oo-see'-ah}, number 1849 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, and here means: one who possesses authority. God allows Satan for now to possess the power of the air. God is the ultimate Authority, and in ACTS 1:7 we find this very same Greek word exousia {ex-oo-see'-ah} used to express God's power where Jesus says in ACTS 1:7 *...It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power...* exousia {ex-oo-see'-ah}. Thus we must understand that Satan too has power that God allows him to have, and Satan by his power deceived Eve, and because of this sin entered into the world, and death by sin, according to ROMANS 5:12. Satan deceiveth the whole world according to REVELATION 12:9.

So what does all this information about Satan being the prince of the power of the air have to do with the question being asked by the Sanhedrin in ACTS 4:7 *...they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?* In other words behind the scene it was Satan influencing those of the Sanhedrin council to ask by whose authority have ye done this miracle of healing of the lame man? The Sanhedrin council thought they were the authority, the power in charge here being the rulers of

the Jews. Satan also thought he was in charge being "...the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience." One of Scofield's notes found in MATTHEW 3:7 adds further insight as to the thinking of the Sadducees noting that they denied the existence of angels, or other spirits, and all miracles, especially the resurrection. So we also find, as we read earlier in ACTS 4:16 that it must have been very difficult for the Sanhedrin council to come to grips with the fact ...that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it.

Back here in ACTS 4:7 it is also interesting to note that they also asked ...by what name, have ye done this? Again these of the Sanhedrin council thought they were the ones who regulated the religious affairs of the nation of Israel. Being promoted by Satan they certainly didn't acknowledge that God was the one in charge, and that Israel was a chosen special people to God Himself. We find this fact stated in DEUTERONOMY 7. These are the words of Moses spoken to the children of Israel, found in DEUTERONOMY 7:6 *For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. 7 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: 8 But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9 Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations.* I did the math here and a thousand generations equals about 20,000 years!

We mentioned earlier that on the surface the question asked in ACTS 4:7 seems like a really dumb question: ...they asked, *By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?* And perhaps to us this is a dumb question from our perspective as believers, but to the unbelieving Sanhedrin councils' perspective this was a pertinent question to ask, because they were under the impression that they were the authority, and the power in charge here. Some of these same members of the Sanhedrin that had arrested Peter and John here in ACTS 4 had previously asked Jesus a similar question. Let's look at that for a minute, and we will read this in MATTHEW 21. {The same story is also recorded in MARK 11:27-33; and LUKE 20:1-8.} MATTHEW 21:23 *And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? 24 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. 25 The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? 26 But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. 27 And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.* Sister Bodie in her MATTHEW commentary here wrote: "They had refused to acknowledge His divine rights, attested to by divine words and works. Therefore, He refuses to acknowledge their authority to question Him in any sense." {End of quoting Sister Bodie.} Brother Hawkins in his LUKE commentary of this same story records that they wished to put Jesus on the defensive, but Jesus with His questioning put them on the defensive.

Jesus goes on in MATTHEW 21 to give them a couple of parables to think about, then we read starting in MATTHEW 21:42 something that will come up again in our text of ACTS 4. MATTHEW 21:42 *Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, **The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?*** The scripture that Jesus was quoting here is found in PSALMS 118. PSALMS 118:22 *The stone which the builders refused is become **the head stone of the corner.** 23 **This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.*** {See also MARK 12:10, and LUKE 20:17.} Here in MATTHEW 21:42 Jesus references Himself being **the Stone, ...the head of the corner.** The phrase ...**the head of the corner...** is found in five scriptures, all in the New Testament, (MATTHEW 21:42; MARK 12:10; LUKE 20:17; ACTS 4:11; and 2 PETER 2:7). Five is the number of GRACE,

and we know by GRACE are ye saved through faith as is stated in EPHESIANS 2:5 & 8. GRACE always points us to Jesus, for the GRACE of God is given you by Jesus Christ 1 CORINTHIANS 1:4 tells us. The emphasis here in MATTHEW 21:42, and all five of these “**the head of the corner**” scriptures, is upon our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus. The following three portions of scripture further amplify this point, that Christ is **the sure foundation stone**, “**the head of the corner.**” ISAIAH 28:16 *Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.* EPHESIANS 2:20 *And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.* 1 PETER 2:6 *Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.* Peter here in verse 8 is quoting from ISAIAH 8:14 a verse the Apostle Paul also quotes from in ROMANS 9:33. ISAIAH 8:14 *And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin (a trap or entanglement; a net to catch birds) and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.* ROMANS 9:33 *As it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

MATTHEW 21:42 *Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? 43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. 44 And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.* To ... *fall on this stone...* means to come to Him with a broken and contrite spirit, which will bring salvation. To refuse that offer, **the Stone** becomes a devastating judgment. After Jesus said this to them we next read in MATTHEW 21:45 *And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. 46 But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.*

Recall again what Jesus said in ACTS 1:8 concerning the Holy Ghost: *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:...* . We mentioned previously in class that it would be hard to define in exact terms what this power of the Holy Ghost fully encompasses, and it will take eternity before we fully realize what the power of the Holy Ghost has done, is doing, and will do. Our brother in the Lord, Luke, writes 28 chapters in ACTS explaining some more of what this statement of ACTS 1:8 means: *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:...* . In ACTS 1:8 the Greek word translated “power” is *dunamis* {doo'-nam-is}, number 1411 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, and Brother Hill liked to point out to us that this is the same Greek word where we get dynamite from. Here in ACTS 1:8 “power” references the mighty working “power” of the Holy Ghost. This is an infinite “power,” an unlimited “power,” the “power” that brought from the dead our Lord Jesus according to HEBREWS 13:20. This is the “power” of His resurrection discussed in PHILIPPIANS 3:10, and the “power” of an endless life in HEBREWS 7:16. Can you define this endless, limitless “power?”

In ACTS 4:7 they of the Sanhedrin council ...*asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?* This is a two-part question. The Greek word for “power” here in ACTS 4:7 is also *dunamis*, not the Greek word *exousia* we looked at earlier that translates into one who possesses authority. So here in ACTS 4 we find that Peter gets to exercise some more of the *dunamis* power of the Holy Ghost as he allows the Holy Ghost to answer the Sanhedrin's questioning with these words: ACTS 4:8 *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, 9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; 10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man*

stand here before you whole. 11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. 12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

One should not ask a question if they really don't want the correct answer. The haughty Sanhedrin council had just got knocked off their high horse (so to speak) by a lowly so called unlearned and ignorant fisherman! But this now former fisherman was full of the Holy Ghost, and the dunamis power that comes with the Holy Ghost. And Peter's Holy Ghost inspired answer to their question was polite, and respectful, and full of undeniable truth. Truly Peter's answer to the Sanhedrin council's question was a Master Piece. Peter's Holy Ghost inspired answer is the gospel in five verses!

In ACTS 4:8 we find *...Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost.* In my younger days I remember Brother Hill preaching from this same verse, and noted here that Peter was like a net crammed full of the Holy Ghost. Back in his fishing days the only times recorded in scripture when Peter ever caught any fish was after following Jesus instructions as to where to cast his fishing net, and each time Peter followed Jesus instruction his fishing net was crammed full of fish. {Study LUKE 5:5 & 6; and JOHN 21:6-8.} So we find here in ACTS 4:8 that Peter was filled to the full of the Holy Ghost, like a fishing net crammed full of fish. Certainly Peter here was also prompted by the Holy Ghost to recall Jesus words of LUKE 12:11 & 12, which reads: *And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: 12 For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.* So we find Peter full of the Holy Ghost respectfully answered the Sanhedrin council, and *...said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole...* ACTS 4:8-10. This was just the first sentence of Peter's Holy Ghost inspired words, where Peter points out to these poor unbelieving council members, some of whom were Sadducees, who didn't believe either in miracles, or the resurrection, that the impotent man was healed by Jesus Christ of Nazareth as further proof that He lives, being raised from the dead, and that Jesus Christ of Nazareth is still in the healing business. Twice the Holy Ghost has Peter mention that the lame man is made whole. Further notice that we find the lame man standing here with Peter and John as exhibit A (if you will).

And then by the power of the Holy Ghost, Peter in ACTS 4:11 reminds them of the very words Jesus spoke to them in MATTHEW 21 that we looked at earlier, how that Jesus Christ of Nazareth *...is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner...* ACTS 4:11. The Holy Ghost also here has Peter call the Sanhedrin council "you builders," who may have been fond of this title, but Peter by the power of the Holy Ghost calls them out, stating "you builders" have made miserable work of it, having despised with contempt, and rejected the Stone of Israel, who is *...Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead.* And the Holy Ghost wasn't yet through empowering Peter words here for He had Peter say one more sentence concerning Jesus Christ of Nazareth, found in ACTS 4:12 *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* Verse 12 is the end of Peter's gospel in five verses, which we will examine in more detail shortly for it is a very powerful verse.

Let's look again at the beautiful scriptural points the Holy Ghost has empowered Peter to speak to these haughty members of the unbelieving Sanhedrin council. Peter has told them in no uncertain terms that Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, is the Stone, the Chief corner Stone, which you builders rejected, and set as nought, and this same Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom God raised from the dead is the sure foundation corner stone, the head of the corner, whom He Himself told you about back in MATTHEW 21. He is the solid Rock of Ages, the Rock of our Salvation that Moses spoke of in DEUTERONOMY 32, that David spoke of in 2 SAMUEL 22 and PSALMS 18, whom the prophet Isaiah wrote about in ISAAIAH 28:16, and in ISAAIAH 8 from which

scripture Jesus Christ Himself also quoted to you in MATTHEW 21. Jesus Christ of Nazareth is Christ the Saviour, the Solid foundation Rock whereby we must be saved. The concluding point made by Peter before the Sanhedrin council is found in ACTS 4:12 *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

ACTS 4:12 is a stand alone scripture. It is a unique scripture. It fully explains how salvation is obtained. It fully explains how we must be saved. ACTS 4:12 totally explains that it is by the name of **Jesus Christ of Nazareth**, and by no other name whereby we must be saved! The word "whereby" is only found in thirty-seven verses of scripture, and thirty-nine is the number associated with THE WORD OF GOD, and THE WORD OF GOD is another name for Jesus according to REVELATION 19:13! Finally in verse 12 the Holy Ghost has Peter tell those of the Sanhedrin council the fact "...we must be saved." The word "must" here means that it is a necessity in reference to what is required to obtain salvation. The fact remains "...we must be saved." Again it is by the name of **Jesus Christ of Nazareth**, and by no other name whereby we must be saved!

The two part question the Sanhedrin council asked Peter and John in ACTS 4:7 was *...By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?* The Holy Ghost inspired Peter to answer with the response we read in ACTS 4:10 & 12 -- *Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. ...12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* We know that the name of Jesus is above every name for God ordained it so. One portion of scripture among many that explain this is found in PHILIPPIANS 2. PHILIPPIANS 2:9 *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* It is interesting to note that we find the name **Jesus of Nazareth** seventeen times in scripture, seventeen being the number that points to VICTORY IN CHRIST JESUS. **Jesus of Nazareth** is given a name which is above every name as we read here in PHILIPPIANS 2:9, and this thought is also recorded in 1 CHRONICLES 29:11 in a prayer of David's: *Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all.* Here in 1 CHRONICLE 29:11 David describes the GRACE of our Lord Jesus with five adjectives: (1) greatness; (2) power; (3) glory; (4) victory; and (5) majesty! The name **Jesus Christ of Nazareth** is found in two scriptures, ACTS 3:6, and ACTS 4:10, the number two being also a number of **Jesus**, the second person of the trinity, and the number two is also the number of SUFFICIENT TESTIMONY, or SUFFICIENT WITNESS. Thus we see here in Peter's powerful Holy Ghost inspired answer to the Sanhedrin council in ACTS 4:8-12 that the spotlight, the emphasis is placed upon *...the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth... ..Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

Ponder in your own studies the power that is in Jesus name. It will be a very much worthwhile study. Peter, by the power of the Holy Ghost, and told those of the Sanhedrin council in ACTS 4:10 *...that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.* That is just one example of the healing power that is in in Jesus name. Peter had also just explained to these unbelievers of the Sanhedrin council how that there is salvation power in the name of Jesus, and that *...there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* These facts are just the tip of the iceberg of the infinite power that is in Jesus name.

Moving on here in ACTS 4 we find the results of Peter's powerful Holy Ghost inspired response in answering the Sanhedrin's questions. ACTS 4:13 *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. 14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. 15 But when they had commanded them to go*

aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, 16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. 17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

Before we look into these verses a little closer we must consider how Luke, the writer of ACTS, how did he know what the Sanhedrin council had discussed in private among themselves? Luke wasn't there to hear their arguments amongst themselves, however when Peter and John, and the lame man were called back into the midst of the council we find that it was probably the Sanhedrin council members who revealed unto Peter and John what they were discussing when they conferred among themselves. Luke, in his many interviews with the ministers, and eyewitnesses most likely had this information conveyed to him by either Peter, or John these many years later as he wrote the book of ACTS.

The outstanding information we learn in ACTS 4:13 and 14 is that the Sanhedrin council members had taken note that Peter and John were in their eyes "unlearned and ignorant men." It was obvious to the Sanhedrin council that Peter, and John hadn't received the higher education that they themselves had acquired, however they did take note of the fact *...that they had been with Jesus*. Some of the Sanhedrin no doubt also took knowledge of the fact that Jesus Christ of Nazareth was called Master, meaning a Master Teacher. We mentioned early on in this study that forty times in scripture Jesus is referenced as "Master," a term used in reference to a teacher, and in Jesus case, a Master Teacher. The Greek word for Master is didaskalos {did-as'-kal-os}, number 1320 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, sometimes translated "Rabbi," and also "Rabboni." Vine's dictionary properly notes that there are more instance of this Greek word being used by Luke than all of the other gospel writers. Additionally Luke seven times uses the Greek word epistates (number 1988 in The Strong's Greek Concordance), which is also translated Master, but in this usage Master is used in recognition of His authority rather than His instruction as the Master Teacher. Luke is the only one in scripture to use this Greek word. In LUKE 20:19-47 we find some of these very same members of the Sanhedrin council themselves calling Jesus Master. So here in ACTS 4:13 the Sanhedrin council notes Peter and John were in their eyes "unlearned and ignorant men," yet at the same time they also *...took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus*. In other words the Sanhedrin council took knowledge that Peter and John had learned something from the Master Teacher Himself, but lacked the higher education that they themselves had acquired. Certainly we do not consider Peter and John as "unlearned and ignorant men." We must also realize that Peter and John later wrote seven books of the New Testament, which is quite an accomplishment if Peter and John were really "unlearned and ignorant men." These seven books of the New Testament that Peter and John wrote were in fact inspired by the Holy Ghost, proving to us a truth that the Apostle Paul wrote us in 1 CORINTHIANS 1. 1 CORINTHIANS 1:26 *For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: 27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty*. Certainly the wise and so-called mighty men of the Sanhedrin council were truly confounded by the two lowly fishermen that had confirmed to them *...that they had been with Jesus*; but not fully realizing that Peter and John had also received their higher education in the things of God by the Master Teacher Himself. The members of the Sanhedrin council were well educated in the things of the world, and Peter and John received their guidance from the Holy Ghost.

One more thing that these highly educated members of the Sanhedrin council couldn't explain here was the healed lame man, whom that they themselves had seen for years asking alms at the gate called Beautiful at the entrance of the temple. We find in ACTS 4:14 that along side Peter and John was *...the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it*. The Holy Ghost has Luke write here in ACTS 4:14 that they were *...beholding the man which was healed*. The reality here was that they were beholding the wrong man. The Man they should have been beholding is the Man Christ Jesus, which was the Man Peter had just told them about.

ACTS 4:15 *But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, 16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. 17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.*

Here in verse 15 we find for the first of fifteen times in ACTS the word “council,” verifying the fact that the rules, and elders, and scribes, and Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priests, that were mentioned in ACTS 4:4 & 5 were members of this “council.” The Greek word for “council” here is sunedrion {soon-ed'-ree-on}, number 4892 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, from where we get the English word “Sanhedrin.” Essentially the Sanhedrin council was the supreme court of the Jews. One of their administrative duties was the collection of taxes in Judaea. It is interesting to also note that in carrying out their tax collection duties, they sold the revenue to tax-purchasers, who were the publicans. Study the story of Zacchaeus in LUKE 19:1-10, and learn there that he was a chief publican, who was rich, but most importantly Zacchaeus is noted in these verses to have found salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of Man who visited Zacchaeus that day! Zacchaeus had learned the facts of ACTS 4:12 *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

In ACTS 4:16 we find that the Sanhedrin council concluded that a notable miracle had been done with the healing of the lame man, and that there was no way any who dwell in Jerusalem could deny it. Even though they couldn’t explain how the lame man was healed, and because they couldn’t accept what Peter had told them as the truth, we find in verse 17 that they thought the best response they could come up with was to threaten Peter and John not to speak any more in the name of Jesus.

ACTS 4:18 *And they called them, (Peter and John) and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. 21 So when they (the Sanhedrin council) had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done. 22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.* Here in verse 22 we find that the lame man, who was healed was over forty old, and recall from ACTS 3:2 that he had been lame from birth! Thus we find that the only true statement the Sanhedrin council made here is the one that is recorded in ACTS 4:16 *...indeed a notable miracle hath been done.*

Jumping ahead in our thinking for a minute, we will find Peter, and John, and all rest of the Apostles being arrested again by this very same Sanhedrin council in ACTS 5. In ACTS 4:18 the Sanhedrin council “commanded” Peter and John *...them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.* Three verses later in ACTS 4:21 we find the Sanhedrin council threatened Peter and John before they let them go. In ACTS 5:40 we will find that this same Sanhedrin council will beat the Apostles before they let them go. The phrase “let them go” found in ACTS 4:21, and again in ACTS 5:40 is a phrase found a total of nineteen times in scripture. Nineteen is the number associated with FAITH, and back here in ACTS 4 we will find in the remaining verses of this chapter how the Apostles FAITH in the Lord was emboldened.

ACTS 4:23 *And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. 24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: 25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? 26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. 27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, 28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. 29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all*

boldness they may speak thy word, 30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. 31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

Note that their collective prayer here was for the will of God to prevail, and that they be granted the “**boldness**” to continue to speak the word of God, and for Him to continue stretching forth His mighty hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may continue to be performed in the name of Jesus. In other words they were lifting up their hands to God asking for His continued help, and asking for God to continue stretching forth His hand in a mighty way, so that in the name of Jesus many others could be helped too. The Greek noun Luke uses three times in ACTS 4 that translates into English as “**boldness**” is parrhesia {par-rhay-see'-ah}, number 3954 in The Strong's Greek Concordance. This “**boldness**” is a further manifestation of the power of the Holy Ghost, which Jesus promised in ACTS 1:8 where he said “...ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you... .” This parrhesia {par-rhay-see'-ah} “**boldness**” speaks of open and frank freedom of unreserved speech, spoken without ambiguity in confidence, and cheerful courage, and assurance. The three verses of ACTS 4 where we find this Holy Ghost inspired parrhesia {par-rhay-see'-ah} “**boldness**” is: ACTS 4:13 *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.* ACTS 4:29 *And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,* and ACTS 4:31 *And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.*

ACTS 4:24-30 records the collective Holy Ghost inspired prayer that was made with one accord by the company of the Apostles in the name of the Lord. ACTS 4:24-26 is quoted from PSALMS 2:1 & 2. PSALMS 2 is a Messianic Psalm meaning that it was one of 18 PSALMS that has to do with the promised Messiah, Christ Jesus the Anointed One. The Apostle Paul also quotes from the second PSALM in ACTS 13:33, HEBREWS 1:5 and HEBREWS 5:5. PSALMS 2:1 *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed,... .* ACTS 4:24 *And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: 25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? 26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.*

In ACTS 4:27-30 is an acknowledgement, and an expression of thankfulness of what has been already done, and what will be accomplished in the future in the name of Jesus. ACTS 4:27 *For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, 28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. 29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, 30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.* The “threatenings” mentioned in verse 29 is a reference to the Sanhedrin council's “threatenings” of verse 21. The collective request unto the Lord was to *...behold their threatenings,...* and going forward to *...grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.*

God, through the power of the Holy Ghost, gave them an immediate sign that He would honor their unselfish request, which is noted in verse 31. ACTS 4:31 *And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.* Wow, what a verse! Basically this was God's way of showing the Apostles His approval of their request, and an acknowledgement of what is stated in the conclusion of PSALMS 2. The last part of PSALMS 2:12 reads: *Blessed are all they that put their*

trust in him. Those who have a Scofield Bible will find the following notation by C. I. Scofield in his notes concerning the word “trust” in his commentary on PSALMS 2:12. “Trust is the characteristic Old Testament word for the New Testament “faith,” “believe.” It occurs 152 times in the Old Testament, and is the rendering of Hebrew words signifying to take refuge (RUTH 2:12); to lean on (PSALMS 56:3); to stay upon (JOB 35:14).” {End of quoting from Scofield.} Here in ACTS 4:29 & 30 we find the collective prayer request made unto the Lord to ...*grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus...* was a prayer made “by faith.” It was a prayer acknowledging with one hundred per cent certainty that they agreed with David’s statement of PSALMS 2:12 -- *Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.* It was simply “by faith” that they put their trust in the Lord to ...*grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.* There are thirty-seven “by faith” statements found in the Bible, and again thirty-seven is the number having to do with THE WORD OF GOD. THE WORD OF GOD is another name for Jesus, in whose name the disciples had just prayed “by faith.” And always remember the thought expressed in HEBREWS 11:6, that ...*without faith it is impossible to please... God!*

ACTS 4:31 also tells God’s immediate answer to their prayer: *And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together.* The place where they were assembled being “shaken” here again was God’s way of showing the disciples His approval of their petitions, that He was pleased with their requests, and that He would make sure positive results would follow. In ACTS 16:25-31 we find another great shaking at the midnight hour as Paul and Silas sang praises unto the Lord from their Philippian prison cell. This example too shows God’s immediate answer to prayer, and praises spoken by faith at the darkest times of tests and trial. ACTS 16:25 *And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.* And God certainly heard them too as we read in ACTS 16:26 *And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed.* This being set free by God also shows David’s statement of PSALMS 2:12 in action: *Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.* Within the hour the Philippian jailor, and those in his house got saved having believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

ACTS 4:31 *And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.* Here again we find the phrase “filled with the Holy Ghost” is a scriptural term found eight times in the Bible. One of the meanings of the number eight is BRIDE, as in the BRIDE of Christ. Without any shadow of a doubt the Bride of Christ will not only be “filled with the Holy Ghost,” but also full of the Holy Ghost. Keep in mind that those assembled together here in ACTS 4 were not yet part of those who were given the opportunity to qualify to be in the Bride of Christ. The great mystery of the Bride of Christ is spoken of by the Apostle Paul in EPHESIANS 5:32. The Apostle Paul won’t come on the scene until a few years down the road from this point in ACTS 4.

Taking this one step further before moving on here in ACTS 4, let us be aware of the following. We read in ROMANS 11:13 these words of the Apostle Paul: *For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.* In 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1 our Apostle Paul writes: *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.* Back a few chapters in 1 CORINTHIANS 4:16 Paul wrote: *Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.* Again Paul encourages us to be followers of Paul as he followed Christ with this statement found in PHILIPPIANS 3:17 *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.* The reason we are to follow Paul as he followed Christ is stated in 2 CORINTHIANS 11:2 *For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.* The Greek word for espoused is harmozo {har-mod'-zo}, number 718 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, meaning to give one in marriage. Paul is the Apostle given to us Gentiles, who has espoused us, given us in marriage to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the great mystery spoken of by the Apostle Paul in EPHESIANS 5:32.

EPHESIANS 5:32 *This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.* The great mystery of the Bride of Christ unfortunately remains a great mystery in most churches today simply because they do not have the Holy Ghost to teach them the truth, and if they do they fail to see Paul's doctrine of ranks in the resurrection. Not everyone saved during this Church Age will be in the Bride of Christ. Not everyone filled with the Holy Ghost during this Church Age will be in the Bride of Christ either. EPHESIANS 5:21-33 when studied carefully reveals facts about the rib portion company from the church of Christ that will be made into the Bride of Christ. God didn't make Eve out of the whole body of Adam, but he made Adam a bride out of only one rib of Adam, the rib closest to his heart. So too will be the Bride of Christ, a rib portion company from out of the church (the body of Christ) will be made into the Bride of Christ! The majority of Christians are not filled with the Holy Ghost, and it takes the power of the Holy Spirit to reveal this truth to our hearts. And as we have stated many times before, the whole purpose of this Church Age is to take out a Bride for Christ. This was the message that was given unto Paul to preach for this Church Age, that Jesus Christ will have a joint-heir [sugkleronomos, {number 4789 in The Strong's Greek Concordance}], Bride to reign with Him in the Millennium, the Kingdom Age, and for eternities to come after that. This is how Paul wrote it in ROMANS 8:16 *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; {kleronomos (2818)} heirs of God, and (sugkleronomos) joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* The most profound, and complete meaning of the Greek word sugkleronomos is joint-heir, or co-inheritor as of a wife with her husband! Again this was the message that was given unto Paul to preach for this Church Age, that Jesus Christ will have a Bride.

Peter and the other Kingdom Apostles didn't preach this message, nor was this message of the Bride of Christ revealed unto them. Peter and John and the other Kingdom Apostles were there on the day of Pentecost when the Church age was ushered in by the power of the Holy Ghost. The Church Age began on the day of Pentecost, and continues to this present time. Approximately the first seven years of this Church Age was a time of transition from the Age of the Law to the Age of Grace, which is the Church Age. Once the Bridal Company is taken away at the end of this Church Age, the Kingdom Age, also called the Millennium, will begin. Approximately the first seven years of the Millennium will be the transition time between the Church Age, and the Millennium, and this transition time will be the yet future Tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble spoken of in JEREMIAH 30:7, the time of trouble spoken about in DANIEL 12:1, and the Great Tribulation of MATTHEW 24:21.

With this understanding then let's finish our reading of ACTS 4. ACTS 4:32 *And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. 33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. 34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.*

We noted at the conclusion of ACTS 2 that "the church" at Jerusalem mentioned in ACTS 2:42-47 and ACTS 4:32-35 picture a millennial scene. The scene expressed in ACTS 2:42-47 and ACTS 4:32-35 of the church in Jerusalem pictures a different economy than we are familiar with. Brother Copley pointed out in his commentary on the book of ACTS chapter 2 that "very year in which Jesus died and the Holy Spirit was poured out was a Jubilee. The disciples supposed that the millennial reign of Christ was due and that He would return very soon. Indeed, it was due, and He would have come back about seven years later, if the Jews as a nation had received Him. Therefore, they acted in obedience to Leviticus 25 and sold their possessions and had all things common, as they will do again when the Lord returns. However, Jesus did not return then, but introduced a different order of procedure. The Church was never intended to observe that rule of order given to Israel.

Hence, the Apostle Paul, the Church Apostle, distinctively never taught the community of goods. For that reason, wherever men have endeavored to introduce such a custom, it always failed. They were not led of the Lord.” {End of quoting Brother Copley.}

Barnabas

In ACTS 4:36 & 37 the Holy Spirit has Luke introduce Barnabas. ACTS 4:36 *And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, 37 Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.* Later in ACTS 11:24 we find this statement concerning Barnabas: *For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith... . The Holy Ghost has Luke introduce Barnabas here at the end of ACTS 4 as an outstanding example of the fact that ...the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common... ACTS 4:32.*

(Later, when we look at the first 11 verses of ACTS 5, we will see a contrast between those who believe, and those who believe not.)

Our Brother in the Lord, Luke, personally knew Barnabas, for Barnabas was noted not only *...a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith...* as we just read in ACTS 11:24, but Barnabas also was a noted prophet and teacher at Antioch, Syria according to ACTS 13:1, and Antioch, Syria is where Luke first met both Barnabas and Paul, and where Luke learned Paul's gospel. Barnabas is mentioned by name twenty-four times in the book of ACTS, and the Apostle Paul will mention Barnabas five more times in his epistles. Twenty-four is a number of the PRIESTHOOD, and the Old Testament Priests of the children of Israel were Levites, that is of the tribe of Levi. The Levite's were the tribe of Israel in charge of the service of the tabernacle, and helping Aaron and his sons perform their office of a priest. {Study NUMBERS 8.} The word "Levite" is found 39 times in scripture, 39 being the number of CHANGE. Interestingly the 39th time the word Levite is used in scripture is in this 36th verse of ACTS 4, where it is used in connection with Barnabas, a man used of God during this change of ages, which took place during Barnabas' lifetime.

Again Barnabas was a Levite, and we find in ACTS 4:36 his name is interpreted as being the son of consolation. The Greek word for consolation is paraklesis {par-ak'-lay-sis}, number 3874 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, meaning among other things: exhortation, admonition, and encouragement. Some translations of ACTS 4:36 refer to Barnabas as the Son of comfort, the man of encouragement, and even one translation refers to Barnabas as the preacher. These names are all very fitting of Barnabas. As we get further into the book of ACTS we will find that Barnabas stands out as the one man, who in the beginning was the greatest encouragement to Saul of Tarsus in his early ministry, and Saul of Tarsus became our Apostle Paul! We further learn in ACTS 4:36 that Barnabas was of the country of Cyprus, and Cyprus name means "love: a blossom."

Thus we know a lot about Barnabas. He was one of the early believers filled with the Holy Ghost. Barnabas will become one of the Church Apostles, and recall the Church Apostles are the ones who taught Paul's gospel message. As a Church Apostle we should hold Barnabas in high esteem, for in ACTS 15:25 & 26 Barnabas is singled out with Paul as being one who hazarded his life in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the furtherance of the gospel. Without Barnabas being led of the Holy Ghost like he was, we have no Apostle Paul, for it was Barnabas who introduced Paul first to the Apostles at Jerusalem, and then to those at Antioch, Syria. Without Barnabas we have no Gospel According to MARK, for John Mark was Barnabas' nephew, and it was Barnabas who taught John Mark Paul's gospel message. That is why Paul could write late in life in his second letter to Timothy: 2 TIMOTHY 4:11 *...Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.* Take the time to research the facts of this statement, and learn that it was after the time frame of ACTS 15, after Barnabas and Paul departed from one another, that Mark became profitable to Paul for the ministry. How did Mark learn Paul's gospel message? Mark had to have learned this gospel message of the Apostle Paul from his uncle Barnabas after Barnabas and Paul departed one

from the other. And one more tidbit concerning Barnabas and Paul; it was after they parted from one another that Paul began writing his epistles. Had Barnabas and Paul never separated, would we ever have any letters written us from Paul? Obviously the facts of PSALMS 37:23 answer this question for us: *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.* The steps of both Barnabas and Paul were ordered by the Lord.

File all of this information about Barnabas in the back of your mind for now, and we will learn much more about Barnabas later in this study the Lord willing. Here in ACTS 4:37 we find Barnabas being a blessing, and an encouragement to the early church at Jerusalem. ACTS 4:37 note that Barnabas: *...Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.* So Barnabas was a blessing, and well respected by the Kingdom Apostles, and the rest of the early church at Jerusalem, and Barnabas fit right in with what we read above: ACTS 4:32 *And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.* 33 *And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.* 34 *Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,* 35 *And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.*

ACTS 5

Before we get started studying ACTS 5 let us recall that THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES written by Luke could have just as easily be entitled ACTS of the Holy Ghost. Amplified in the book of ACTS is Jesus last words before His ascension recorded in ACTS 1:8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.* On the day of Pentecost in ACTS 2 the Holy Ghost was sent, and we begin to see in that chapter a little of the power of the Holy Ghost manifested as literally thousand heard in their own language the wonderful works of God being spoken by the Galileans, who had just been filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak in other tongues as the Holy Spirit gave them the utterance. Also in ACTS 2 under the power, and inspiration of the Holy Ghost, Peter, on that day of Pentecost, preached his first sermon, after which about three thousand were saved that same day. And we read in ACTS 2:47 that *...the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.* Thus began the Church Age on the day of Pentecost. Note here that it was the Lord who *... added to the church daily such as should be saved.* Brother Copley noted in his comments that after “the Holy Spirit was poured out, and a new age was introduced. Apparently it was the millennial age, which it would have been if Israel had received Jesus then as Messiah, ...but the Jewish nation rejected Christ; therefore, He had to postpone His coming to reign.” {End of quoting Brother Copley.}

In ACTS 3 we found that the Holy Ghost encouraged Peter and John to pray in Jesus name for a lame man to be healed, which happened in spectacular fashion. Peter then preached his second sermon, and the results recorded in ACTS 4:4 was that another approximate five thousand were saved, and added to the church. We also noted earlier that during approximately the first seven years of this Church Age, Millennial/Kingdom blessings were displayed for a period of time. We noted this also that ACTS 2:42-47, and ACTS 4:32-35 picture a Millennial scene. A common theme found during this first seven years of the Church Age was that in Jerusalem that *...all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need...* ACTS 2:44 & 45. ACTS 4:32-35 repeats this same thought, stating: *And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.* 33 *And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.* 34 *Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,* 35 *And laid them*

down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. Barnabas as we noted above was also a part of this collection of Holy Ghost filled believers, who in ACTS 4:37 *...Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.*

Before we read the first several verses of ACTS 5 keep in mind that the power of the Holy Ghost was mightily being manifest by the Apostles. This in fact was the request they made in prayer to the Lord in ACTS 4:29 & 30, that He would *...grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, 30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.* We are going to see some "signs and wonders" manifest in ACTS 5. The word "signs" here in ACTS 4:30 points to an unusual occurrence, transcending the common course of nature. The word "wonder" in ACTS 4:30 means something strange, causing the beholder to marvel. "Signs and wonders" were granted to the to be done by the hands of the Apostles as is stated in ACTS 5:12 concerning the Kingdom Apostles; in ACTS 14:3 "signs and wonders" were recorded concerning the ministry of Paul and Barnabas; and in ROMANS 15:19 "signs and wonders" were mentioned in regards to the ministry of Christ preached by the Apostle Paul. These "signs and wonders" were to *...be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.* These "signs and wonders" were always manifested in the name of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost in accordance with Jesus statement of ACTS 1:8 *"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you... "* And again this power of the Holy Ghost manifest in the name of Jesus has no limits nor bounds. The Apostle Paul further amplifies in HEBREWS 2:1-4 that it was by the Apostle and High Priest Christ Jesus that these "signs and wonders" were granted by the power of the Holy Ghost. HEBREWS 2:1 *Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. 2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; 3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; 4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?* In ACTS 5:1-11 we are going to manifest "signs and wonders" concerning a couple, who did neglect so great salvation.

One final key verse to make note of from ACTS 4 that explains the Holy atmosphere surrounding the Apostles, and the multitude of them that believed there in Jerusalem, is what is stated in ACTS 4:33 *And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.* This was the millennial economy being manifested in Jerusalem at this time.

ACTS 5:1 starts out with the little word "but." This word "but" indicates a change, something different, and that change was that some unbelievers were trying to add themselves to the church without being saved. We read back in ACTS 2:47 that *...the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.* "But" we find in ACTS 5:1-11 a couple who neglected so great salvation as was taught, along with the "signs and wonders" manifested by the hands of the Apostles. And make note that it was Satan who was behind the lies we are about to read. Again this is stated about Satan in JOHN 8:44 *...He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

ACTS 5:1 *But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. 5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. 6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. 7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. 8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. 9 Then Peter said unto her,*

How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. 10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. 11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

This is not a portion of scripture that Pastors preach a Sunday Sermon from. The above verses are mainly reserved for Bible studies, and for Bible teachers and instructors to expand upon. In ACTS 5 we find that the Jewish believers were looking for the kingdom to be restored to Israel, and for Jesus Christ to return and reign as King of kings, and Lord of lords, the blessed and only Potentate, which will happen during the coming Kingdom Age known as the Millennium. This was the mindset of those believers living during the time frame of ACTS 5. They were getting ready to come under the rule where their King was going to rule with absolute power and knowledge, and you wouldn't be able to hide anything from Him. They were expecting soon to see the conditions the Prophet Isaiah foretold in ISAIAH 65 concerning the Millennium.

ISAIAH 65:18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. 19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. 20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. 21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. 22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. 23 They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them. 24 And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. 25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.

These Kingdom Age/Millennium days are coming immediately after the great Tribulation, but during the time frame of ACTS 5 the Jewish believers were during this first seven years of the Church Age, but living under the blessings that will be displayed during the coming Millennial/Kingdom Age. They also here in ACTS 5 were given an example of what will happen to the accursed sinner in the Millennium, who shall be judged and cut off immediately. Ananias and Sapphira are prime examples of such Millennial judgment. So what happened to Ananias and Sapphira in ACTS 5 was not as much of a shock, let's say, to them as it is to us, because they were already living with the foretaste of what it will be like in the Millennium. And for a more detailed explanation of this than I am going in to, may I encourage you to reference Brother Copley's study book on ACTS 5 for some further insight here.

ACTS 5:1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. We read in ACTS 4:32 the mindset of the believers there in Jerusalem at this time, that ...the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. We don't read here that any one "kept back" anything. To do so would be classified as coveting. Here in ACTS 5:1 & 2 Ananias and Sapphira were in agreement to hold back a portion, and to give a "certain part."

Contrast this mindset for a moment with what the Apostle Paul told the Ephesian elders in ACTS 20. *ACTS 20:20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, 21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.* This is the mindset of the full overcomer, to keep back nothing in testifying of the gospel of the grace of God, and *...repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Ananias and Sapphira here in ACTS 5 were of a different mindset than the believers, who were of one heart, and one soul as is stated in ACTS 4:32. In ACTS 5:3 & 4 we find Peter full of the Holy Ghost, and under the power of the Holy Ghost asked Ananias four questions, and these four questions are part of the “signs and wonders” requested in the prayer of ACTS 4:30. ACTS 5:3 *But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.* The Holy Ghost had Peter plainly point out to Ananias that it was Satan who filled his heart to lie; that it was Satan that had you lie to the Holy Ghost. Furthermore The Holy Ghost had Peter tell Ananias that he didn’t have to sell the land, that before he sold the land it was his own, and after the land was sold wasn’t the money at your own disposal to do what you pleased about it? How is it Ananias that you contrived this deed in your own heart? Recall here what is written in JEREMIAH 17:9 & 10 -- *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? 10 I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.* The Holy Ghost then has Peter tell Ananias that in lying unto men, men full of the Holy Ghost, you have also defrauded God! By his own actions Ananias had proved that he was not among the multitude who believed, that were of one heart and one soul spoken of in ACTS 4:32, thus Ananias was found to be an unbeliever, and as we noted above in ISAIAH 65:20 the accursed sinner in the Millennium shall be judged and cut off immediately.

ACTS 5:5 *And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.* The phrase “gave up the ghost” found ten times in scripture simply means he died. Unfortunately this Ananias died also being dead in trespasses and sins, and went to a Christ-less eternity.

The next five verses explain that Sapphira experience the same fate as her husband. ACTS 5:6 *And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. 7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. 8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.*

In verse 9 the Holy Ghost inspired Peter to ask Sapphira: *How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?* To tempt the Holy Spirit here means to craftily challenge, or maliciously put to the test the Holy Ghost. In other words Peter was asking Sapphira how is it that you have decided to provoke the Holy Ghost? ACTS 5:9 *Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. 10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.*

We read in ROMANS 6 three key words: “**know, reckon and yield.**” This is written to the believer, who knows ROMANS 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Thus having accepted Christ as Saviour the believer further **knows** the following facts Paul wrote in ROMANS 6. ROMANS 6:6 *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.* Thus **knowing** as a believer that we are indeed dead unto sin, we are to **reckon** ourselves as being alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Paul writes this in ROMANS 6:11 & 12 -- *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.* Next Paul writes four times in the following verses of ROMANS 6 how we as believer are to **yield** ourselves unto God. ROMANS 6:13 *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and*

your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. ...16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? ...19 ...even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

Again both Ananias and Sapphira are prime examples of Millennial judgment, and the unbelieving sinner being accursed, and cut off immediately. Both Ananias and Sapphira died being dead in trespasses and sins, and went to a Christ-less eternity.

Let's note something here that is mentioned in both ACTS 5:5, and ACTS 5:11. ACTS 5:5 *And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.* ACTS 5:11 *And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.* This "great fear" that came upon all them that heard these things, and upon all the church here in Jerusalem simply means that great awe came over them of the church, and the others who heard these things. In other words this fear was a reverential respect for the display here of God's greatness and majesty, which was expressed by the church here in Jerusalem, and upon as many as heard these things. We further read in 2 TIMOTHY 1:7 *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.* In a moment we will read in ACTS 5:13 how the people, the Jews at Jerusalem, also magnified, that is honored the Apostles with Godly fear.

What is written next in parenthesis in ACTS 5:13 & 14 sheds light upon the fact that there was a difference between those pretending to be believers, like Ananias and Sapphira, who tried to join themselves to the church at Jerusalem without accepting Christ as their Saviour, and those who are joined unto the Lord. We read in 1 CORINTHIANS 6:17 *But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.* The words in parenthesis in ACTS 5:13 & 14 state: (*...And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. 14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.*) Certainly we must acknowledge that there was only one way to "join" this church, and it wasn't with money as Ananias and Sapphira found out. The only way to "join" the church of God here in Jerusalem, or anywhere else, is by accepting our risen Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as their own Saviour! The church of God was purchased upon the cross of Calvary by the precious shed blood of Christ, who died thereupon for our sins. REVELATION 1:5 sums it up by stating that it is *...Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.* Here in ACTS 5:13 we read in an expounded translation *...not a soul from the outside dared to join them, yet the people held them in high esteem.* The Greek word translated "magnified" in ACTS 5:13 is megaluno {meg-al-oo'-no}, number 3170 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, a word which is only found eight times in New Testament scripture. "Magnified" (megaluno {meg-al-oo'-no}) here in ACTS 5:13 shows by context that the people, that is those who were not yet believers, now honored, and regarded the Apostles, and their followers, with both reverence, and fear. Implied in this magnification of the Apostles is the fact that their theme was that they were indeed witnesses of the fact that God had raised up Jesus from the dead. Some of the people thus became believers themselves, thus the statement found in ACTS 5:14 *And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.* Having now accepted Christ as Saviour one becomes a believer, and that is how one joins the church of God, whose salvation Christ Jesus purchased upon the cross of Calvary.

Now let's read the whole text of ACTS 5:12-16. ACTS 5:12 *And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. 13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. 14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) 15 Inasmuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. 16 There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.*

There is something else to be aware of as we continue examining the many “signs and wonders” done by the hands of the Apostles. This is what they prayed for in ACTS 4:30 & 31, but it is also something Jesus Himself told His Apostles would happen back in JOHN 14:12 on the night of the last supper. Jesus told them in JOHN 14:12 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.* Jesus wasn’t telling His Apostles here that they were going to preform greater miracles than did Jesus, for only He is the miracle worker, and the One by the power in His name who can do the many “signs and wonders” we have been reading about. In JOHN 14:12 Jesus was telling His Apostles the works that I do will be grander in scope than they were when I was with you because I go unto my Father, and because I will send the Holy Ghost, and “...ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you...” ACTS 1:8. The works, and the signs and wonders you will do will be grander in scope because through you the word of God will be preached to greater multitudes. The grander in scope works of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Ghost that Jesus spoke of in JOHN 14:12 were being accomplished by the hands of the Apostles in ACTS 5:12-16.

ACTS 5:12-16 is a powerful portion of scripture, let’s read it again. ACTS 5:12 *And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch. 13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. 14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) 15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. 16 There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.*

These five verses highlight the unlimited power of the Holy Ghost in a Holy Spirit filled church. And this is not the first time we have seen magnified what happens in such an assembly gathered in “one accord,” meaning that there was no divided interests, no further discord among the believers, for their hearts were knit together in the love of God the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ. This particular assembly of the early church in Jerusalem was exclusively Jewish, and consisted of thousands of Jews who had become believers in Jesus Christ, all having acknowledged that Jesus Christ was indeed their promised Messiah, and the hope of Israel, spoken of throughout their Old Testament scriptures. As we noted previously when we studied ACTS 2:42-47 and ACTS 4:32-35 they were at the church at Jerusalem during this time frame enjoying millennial blessings that will be prevalent during the coming Kingdom Age, the Millennium, which will happen once the great tribulation is over. These millennial blessings displayed in the early church at Jerusalem only lasted about seven years until the day the nation of Israel nationally rejected Christ, which happened right at the stoning of Stephen in ACTS 7. After that time we read in ACTS 8:1 *...And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.* (Had they not scattered the church wouldn’t have expanded unto regions like Antioch, Syria about three hundred plus miles away where they were first called Christians in ACTS 11:26. Antioch, Syria is the church that later sponsored all of the Apostle Paul’s missionary journeys. We have noted previously that the writer of ACTS, Luke, was most likely from Antioch, Syria, at least that he where he first met the Apostle Paul. Lord willing we will study this further when we get to these later chapters in ACTS.)

Those of you with a Scofield Bible will see that Scofield here entitles these five verses of ACTS 5:12-16 as “the power of a holy church,” and gives as a comparison to see 1 THESSALONIANS 1:1-10, which covers the whole first chapter of 1 THESSALONIANS. The difference in the church Paul writes to in Thessalonica, and the church at Jerusalem here in ACTS 5, is that we are in Paul’s letter about twenty years into this yet present Church Age, and it is during this Church Age, which has now lasted nearly two thousand years, that the events recorded in ACTS 15:14 are taking place. The church in ACTS 5 was exclusively Jewish, the church at Thessalonica that Paul wrote 1 THESSALONIANS to consisted of both Jews and Gentiles. ACTS 15:14 records the word of James the Pastor of the church at Jerusalem during this same time frame in which 1

THESSALONIANS was written, and records how that God for the first time ...*did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.* “A people for His name” can most simply be defined as Christians. Christians properly defined are believers in Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour. Such believers are termed by many other names also, such as Sons of God, children of God, brethren, disciples, Saints, all of these are scriptural terms. One commentator expounded this verse like this: “to take out of them a people for his name; for Himself, for His own glory, to call upon His name, to bear His name, and support His Gospel, His cause, and His interest.” In these nearly two thousand years since James spoke these words of ACTS 15, millions upon millions of Gentiles have become believers, having accepted Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour. Additionally an untold number of the children of Israel, Jews, have also accepted Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour. As ACTS 10:34 records ...*God is no respecter of persons.* Out of this “people for His name” found in ACTS 15:14 comes also a rib portion of people who will be called “Mrs. Jesus,” “The Bride of Christ,” “The Lamb’s wife.” In REVELATION 19:7 we read: *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.* Study closely REVELATION 5:8-10 and note that those who are found in the Bride of Christ are not exclusively Jewish, nor are they exclusively Gentile, but rather they have been redeemed by the blood of Christ ...*out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.* Thus we should note that the church Scofield points to in 1 THESSALONIANS is composed of a different collection of Saints than the church at Jerusalem. During the early part of the Church Age, before they were scattered abroad, the composition of the church at Jerusalem was exclusively Jewish. The church Paul writes to in 1 THESSALONIANS is composed both of Jews, and Gentiles, or as is stated again in REVELATION 5:9 ...*out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.* Furthermore the church at Jerusalem never followed Paul’s teaching, nor did they know Paul’s gospel message, simply because Paul’s gospel was not yet given, nor would it be taught until after the time frame Paul got saved, and had his gospel message revealed to him by the Lord Jesus Christ, which was approximately about ten or so years after the time frame we are studying in ACTS 5. When C. I. Scofield made the statement “the power of a holy church” in comparing what happened in ACTS 5:12-16 in Jerusalem to what happened in Thessalonica in 1 THESSALONIANS 1, Scofield was mainly referencing the fact that the gospel was preached in both of these assemblies in the power of the Holy Ghost, and with much assurance of faith in Jesus Christ, which Paul mentioned in 1 THESSALONIANS 1:5. 1 THESSALONIANS 1:5 *For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.* Thus we must note that it is the power of the Holy Ghost that is being magnified in our text of study here in ACTS 5:12-16.

ACTS 5:12 *And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people.* We discussed a little about “signs and wonders” when we studied the prayer made by the disciples in ACTS 4:24-31. We found in ACTS 4:29 & 30, that they requested that God would ...*grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, 30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.* We see some “signs and wonders” manifested in ACTS 5:12-16. The word “signs” here in ACTS 4:30 points to an unusual occurrence, transcending the common course of nature. The word “wonder” in ACTS 4:30 means something strange, causing the beholder to marvel. “Signs and wonders” were granted to the to be done by the hands of the Apostles as is stated in ACTS 5:12 concerning the Kingdom Apostles.

The “signs and wonders” manifested at this time in Jerusalem are further amplified in ACTS 5:15 & 16 -- *Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. 16 There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.* It was not Peter who healed every one here, let’s make sure we are clear on that point. ISAIAH 53:5 speaks a prophecy about

Jesus, and says: *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.* The Apostle Peter knew this, and also referenced ISAIAH 53:5 when he wrote in 1 PETER 2:24 *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.* There are 77 verses of scripture that mention the word “healed.” 77 can be looked at as SPIRITUAL PERFECTION besides SPIRITUAL PERFECTION, which can only point to our risen Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is the healer!

Where in Jerusalem did all of these “signs and wonders” take place? ACTS 5:12 gives us the answer stating; *And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch.)* The gathering place where the church at Jerusalem assembled was at Solomon’s porch, which was on the eastern exterior portion of the Jewish temple. This was the same place where the lame man was instantly healed in ACTS 3. The original temple constructed by Solomon in 1 KINGS 6:2 & 3 was about ninety feet by thirty feet, and when King Herod reconstructed, and modified this area, it was covered with a roof, thus it is called Solomon’s porch. In JOHN 10 we find Jesus Himself taught at Solomon’s porch. JOHN 10:22 *And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. 23 And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon’s porch. 24 Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. 25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me. 26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. 27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. 30 I and my Father are one. 31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. 32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? 33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. 34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? (Jesus is quoting PSALMS 82:6 here.) 35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; 36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? 37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.*

In ACTS 5:12-16 in the very same place where Jesus had said about two to four years earlier the words we just read, we find magnified proof that He lives, that His words which he spoke were indeed true, and even though they rejected Him in JOHN 10, here in ACTS 5:12-16 we find at this very same place, Solomon’s porch, multitudes of both men and women added to the Lord! The unlimited power of the Holy Ghost was thus amplified. Again ACTS 5:16 tells us: *There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.* Everyone was healed.

When the very same Sanhedrin who crucified Jesus, who had arrested Peter and John in ACTS 4, and had threatened them not to teach or speak at all in the name of Jesus, found out that the Apostles were now here again in the very same place (Solomon’s porch), where Jesus had spoke unto them in JOHN 10, and where the lame man was healed in ACTS 3, and now where multitudes were delivered from devils, and healed every one; they of the Sanhedrin council are found in ACTS 5:17 to be “filled with indignation.” The Sanhedrin council was hot under the collar to say the least, and were indignant of the fact that the Apostles had little or no regard for their authority, and had disobeyed their instructions. However as Peter had previously told them in ACTS 4:19 ...*Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.* Obviously Peter and the other Apostles answered to the ultimate Authority, who is God, and as the Apostle John later wrote in 1 JOHN 4:4 ...*greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.* The power of the

Holy Ghost was once again going to be magnified exceeding above all that the Apostles could have even imagined in the next verses of ACTS 5.

ACTS 5:17 Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, 18 And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. 19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, 20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

Not one time in scripture do we ever read of any of those of the sect of the Sadducees getting saved. They were stubborn in their unbelief, and recall that they didn't believe in the resurrection, nor did they believe in angels or spirits. We noted earlier in this study that the Sadducees doctrine was that the soul and body perish together. We also previously mentioned that the doctrine of the Sadducees had few followers, but those that were of this sect were also of the highest rank in Jewish society, for they were very wealthy and influential. They believed parts of the written law of Moses, but only the parts that agreed with their doctrine, and they denied the oral law of Moses, which the Scribes and Pharisees passed on from one generation to another. They were a priestly clique, but at the same time avowedly irreligious, and most certainly worldly minded. Because of their wealth they controlled the Sanhedrin. Highlight in your thinking that the Sadducees were a stubborn unbelieving lot. It was this part of the Sanhedrin council who *...laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison...* here in ACTS 5:18. Certainly then they of the sect of the Sadducees could never believe that it would be *...the angel of the Lord...* who *...by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life...* in ACTS 5:19 & 20. And when we get to ACTS 12 if the Lord tarries, we will find that the angel of the Lord will once again bust Peter out of prison.

ACTS 5:21 has two sentences; the first sentence tells of the Apostles, and the second tells of the Sanhedrin councils intentions for the day after their arrest. ACTS 5:21 *And when they (the Apostles after being released from prison by the angel of the Lord) heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught.* After the Apostles were set free by the angel of the Lord it was probably too of an exciting time for them to get any more rest that night, and having been given instructions by the angel in verse 20 to go to the temple, we find that they did indeed follow the angels instructions. ACTS 5:20 the angel said *...Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.* 21 *And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught.* Praise the Lord for these God men who continued to be the witnesses of Jesus Christ, and His resurrection. What did they teach? The angel of the Lord had instructed them to *...stand and speak... the words of this life...* in verse 20. The Apostle John wrote in 1 JOHN 5:11 some more about *...the words of this life...* writing: *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* The Apostle John also wrote in JOHN 6:68 some more facts concerning *...the words of this life...* stating: *Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.* Again it was the Apostle John who wrote in 1 JOHN 1:1 *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life. The Word of life is Jesus.* The Apostle John also began The Gospel According to JOHN with these words: JOHN 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ...14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.* Again we see that **The Word of life** is Jesus. In REVELATION 19:13 written by the Apostle John we also read this about Jesus Christ *...His name is called The Word of God.* Then one last portion of scripture that we will read concerning *...the words of this life...* that is spoken of in ACTS 5:20 takes us to what the Apostle Peter himself later wrote in 1 PETER. 1 PETER 1:18 *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, 21 Who*

by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. 22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: 23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by **the word of God**, which liveth and abideth for ever. 24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: 25 But **the word of the Lord endureth for ever**. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. So back here in ACTS 5:20 & 21 we find the Apostles teaching, and preaching early in the morning ...**the words of this life**... as the angel of the Lord had instructed them to do, and the preaching of ...**the words of this life**... were strictly focused upon Christ Jesus, for **The Word of life** is Jesus!!!

As we read on here in ACTS 5:21 the focus shifts back to the unbelieving Sanhedrin council, who were living under the influence of the power of darkness. We read in EPHESIANS 6:12 a little of the power of darkness, and this verse explains: *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.* EPHESIANS 6:12 pretty well describes the influence the unbelieving Sanhedrin council was under. Recall here also that ACTS 5:1 started out with the little word “but.” This word “but” indicates a change, something different, and that change was in the wind, and that there were unbelievers influenced by Satan in the wings. The second sentence in ACTS 5:21 also begins with the little word “but” once again pointing to the fact that there was an enemy of the truth lurking nearby!

ACTS 5:21 *...But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them (the Apostles) brought. 22 But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told, 23 Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within. 24 Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow. 25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.*

The members of the Sanhedrin council had gone to bed thinking that they had stopped the Apostles from preaching and teaching about our risen Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and had just here in these verses learned that the Apostles some how had escaped their prison, and were once again ...*standing in the temple, and teaching the people.* Obviously one lesson we learn here is that the power of darkness is no match for the power of God. Yet as we read on we find that the Sanhedrin council didn't learn this lesson.

ACTS 5:26 *Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned. 27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, 28 Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.*

This was the third time here in ACTS that we find Peter, and the Apostles brought before the Sanhedrin council. We found in ACTS 4:21 that the Sanhedrin council had “threatened them” before letting them go, and ACTS 4:17 tells why they “threatened them” ...*that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.* They of the Sanhedrin council didn't want to hear mentioned ever again the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth! In ACTS 5:17 we find that when they had arrested the Apostles that they “were filled with indignation” against them. They were indignant against the Apostles because they continued to teach and preach in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the Son of God, and our precious Lord and Saviour! ACTS 5:26-28 further reveals that the Sanhedrin councils main point of focus was upon themselves, and trying to get past the true fact they were the one's who had Jesus crucified. In verse 26 we find that these of the Sanhedrin council “...*feared the people*,...” that is they feared the fact that a large multitude of the believing Jews, who followed the Apostles doctrine, and were favorable unto them; they feared their perceived notion that if they had violently again arrested

the Apostles here they themselves would have been stoned. We do not read, or find in scripture that Jesus Apostles ever incited a riot, nor was this their teaching, or thinking, and of course Jesus Christ Himself never taught such a doctrine. ROMANS 8:5 further explains: *For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.* The Apostles were following the leading and guidance of the Holy Ghost. The unsaved Sanhedrin were following their fleshly desires. Paul explains in 1 CORINTHIANS 1:25-31 that these mighty noble wise men, like those of the Sanhedrin council, were indeed confounded by the wisdom, and righteousness of God. 1 CORINTHIANS 1:25 *Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: 27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence. 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*

Knowing these facts of scripture we already see that these self-absorbed-holier-than-thou thinking members of the Sanhedrin were going to come out on the losing end of this current encounter with the Apostles whose confidence was in the Lord. The Apostles knew full well these words from PSALMS 118. PSALMS 118:6 *The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? ...8 It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. 9 It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.* Nevertheless they of the Sanhedrin continued with their further threatenings of the Apostles as we read above in verse 28. ACTS 5:28 *Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.* The word "straitly" used here means that the Apostles were given strict orders by the Sanhedrin council just like they were back in ACTS 4:17-19. ACTS 4:17 *But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. 18 And they called them, (Peter and John) and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.* In a moment we will read how the Apostle's responded to the Sanhedrin's orders here. The Apostles truly were empowered by the Holy Ghost to be witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ both here in Jerusalem, and later to the uttermost part of the earth as Jesus had told them back in ACTS 1:8. There must have been a moment of great appreciation here by the Apostles of what the Lord had done in Jerusalem since the ascension of Jesus in ACTS 1:9, for the Sanhedrin council had themselves acknowledged here in ACTS 5:28 *...behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine.* In the last part of ACTS 5:28 we find out what was really bothering the members of the Sanhedrin council was the fact that in reality they were the ones guilty of shedding innocent blood, the innocent blood of Christ Jesus. Members of this same Sanhedrin had replied to Judas in MATTHEW 27:4 when he told them *...I have betrayed the innocent blood.* And their answer to him was *...What is that to us?* Here in the last part of ACTS 5:28 we find the Sanhedrin council haunted by their shedding the innocent blood of Christ, and were emphatically trying to eliminate the name of Jesus from ever being spoken about. The question *...What is that to us?...* was about to be answered by Peter and the other Apostles.

ACTS 5:29 *Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. 31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.*

These words express both a short sermon, and a testimony. Recall Jesus had told His Apostles back in LUKE 24:48 *And ye are witnesses of these things.* Furthermore Jesus also told them in ACTS 1:8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.* The sermon part of ACTS 5:29-32 is found in verses 30 & 31 -- *The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. 31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.* The testimony part of ACTS 5:29-32 is found both in ACTS 5:29 and 32 -- *...We ought to obey God rather than men. ...32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.* Obviously this was not the response that the Sanhedrin council had “commanded” of the Apostles. In fact ACTS 5:29-32 was just the opposite of what the Sanhedrin council expected to hear.

ACTS 5:33 totally explains how the Sanhedrin council received the Apostles words. ACTS 5:33 *When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.* There is a huge difference in being *...cut to the heart...* and being *...pricked in their heart...* as was the case in ACTS 2:27. Those that were *...pricked in their heart...* in ACTS 2:37 by the words of Peter, repented of their sins, and got saved. Here in ACTS 5:33 we find the Sanhedrin council was *...cut to the heart...* literally meaning to be sawn asunder; to saw in two. This expresses rage, not conviction. One convicted by the pricking of their heart can be saved; the individual *...cut to the heart...* with such rage against the Lord Jesus Christ, and the convicting power of the Holy Ghost, can not be saved. We find the phrase *...cut to the heart...* both here in ACTS 5:33, and again in ACTS 7:54 where they gnashed on Stephen with their teeth, and had him stoned to death. Here in ACTS 5:33 we find the Sanhedrin council enraged to the point that they took counsel to slay the Apostles! Thus as Scofield notes: “the gospel when preached in the power of the Spirit convicts or enrages.”

Before we ACTS 5:34-39 I am going to ask a question that only God knows the answer to. We are in this study examining what Luke wrote both in the gospel of LUKE, and the book of ACTS. We know from 2 TIMOTHY 4:11, which was written by the Apostle Paul shortly before he died, that Luke was there with Paul until the end of Paul’s life. And Luke, as we learned early on in this study, most likely first met Paul when Paul first came to Antioch, Syria. So my question here is, how many times do you think Luke heard the Apostle Paul’s testimony by the time Luke wrote ACTS? The answer is that Luke probably heard Paul give his testimony many times. Part of Paul’s testimony concerns the fact that he was a well-educated Pharisee, who learned the law from one of the most highly acclaimed Doctor’s of the Law of Moses, a well respected Pharisee, and educator, who had his own law school, the finest law school in all of Israel, and this man’s name was Gamaliel. We wonder how many times Luke had heard Paul talk about his Pharisee education at the feet of this Gamaliel. Luke would later record in ACTS 22:3 a little of Paul’s own testimony, where Paul told: *I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers,...* . Paul’s Pharisee father, and mother spared no expense in seeing to it that their boy got the finest Pharisee education, so they made sure that he was taught by Gamaliel there in Jerusalem. We will find in ACTS 5:34 that Gamaliel had a reputation among the Jews of Israel. Part of Gamaliel’s reputation was the fact that he also held the title of “Rabban” meaning Doctor of the law. There were only seven men in Paul’s day ever honored with the title “Rabban.” This title “Rabban” also meant the Gamaliel was the head of the Jewish Sanhedrin. When Paul mentioned in ACTS 22:3 that he was *...brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers...* the implication is that Paul himself was in training to become a future “Rabban” and head of the Jewish Sanhedrin! In the least Paul was learning from Gamaliel to be a Doctor of the law. The perfect manner of the law referenced in ACTS 22:3 further shows the exactness that was to be followed in accordance with Mosaic law. Being a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee, and having been taught by Gamaliel according to the perfect manner and the perfect exactness of the law would have elevated

Paul to the highest position that a Pharisee could achieve in Jewish Religion. All that highfaluting education that Paul received at the feet of Gamaliel led him to the point that he noted himself to be the chiefest of sinners in 1 TIMOTHY 1:15. Furthermore Paul also later noted in PHILIPPIANS 3:4-8 that he counted all of this worldly education as “but dung.” PHILLIPIANS 3:4 *Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: 5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; 6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. 7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.* So we find that Luke full well knew Paul’s testimony of how he grew up being educated at the feet of highly respected Gamaliel. Furthermore Luke also knew that the education that Paul received from Gamaliel paled in comparison to the education Paul received from the Lord Jesus Christ in the very same region of Arabia that Moses received the law. {Study GALATIANS 1:17 & 18.} After that approximate three-year education session in Arabia, Paul returned to society armed with Paul’s gospel message about the high calling of God in Christ Jesus!

The title of “Rabban” we should note is not found in scripture, per se. However this title of “Rabban” is alluded to in scripture with the term “Rabboni,” was an Aramaic form of “Rabban,” a title almost entirely applied to the president of the Sanhedrin. It was a more respectful term than Rabbi, which signified a teacher. “Rabboni” also means Master Teacher, which obviously Jesus Christ was. His Master Teaching ability was first on display in LUKE 2 where we find then twelve year old Jesus in the temple in the midst of the doctors of the law astonishing them with His questions, and answers. The Greek word for Rabboni is rabboni, or rabbouni, number 4462 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, which meaning we noted above of Master Teacher, or my great Master! Rabboni can be also thought of a Doctor of the law of Moses, an expert if you will. Mary Magdalene in JOHN 20:16 addressed our risen Saviour as Rabboni when He appeared unto her at the empty tomb. JOHN 20:16 *Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.* Blind Bartimaeus used this same Greek word Rabboni in addressing Jesus as Lord in MARK 10:51 *And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.* Those with a Scofield Bible will see in the margin that the use of Lord here was really Rabboni, my Master, a term of reverent love. For those of you who wish to study this out further, the word Rabbi is found in seven verses of scripture, and five of these Rabbi verses point to Jesus Christ. JOHN 1:38 *Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? JOHN 1:49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. JOHN 3:2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.* The Greek word for Rabbi is number 4461 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, and is also translated as Master nine times in scripture.

Back to Rabban Gamaliel in ACTS 5. We are well aware that Luke had most likely first heard about Gamaliel from the Apostle Paul when Paul told his testimony. So when we read ACTS 5:34-39 we find Luke telling of Gamaliel, and recording what Gamaliel expressed to the Sanhedrin council in a private conversation with them about the current events of the Apostles as we find them here in ACTS 5. We must note here that Luke, a Gentile, wasn’t here at this time, nor would he ever be privileged to hear the arguments Gamaliel presented in ACTS 5:34-39. So how is it that we find Luke recording what Gamaliel told the Sanhedrin council in private? Obviously Peter, or the other Apostles weren’t present when Gamaliel gave the Sanhedrin council his speech, for ACTS 5:34 records that the Apostles were put forth a little space, meaning put out of the council meeting for a little while, and then in ACTS 5:40 the Apostles were called back before the council. So how did

Luke find out what Gamaliel said to the council in ACTS 5:34-39? We know from 2 TIMOTHY 3:16 that “...*All scripture is given by inspiration of God,*...” and that inspiration is from the Holy Ghost! Furthermore as we have discussed numerous times before, our brother in the Lord, Luke, wrote in LUKE 1:1-4 how he wrote what he was inspired of the Holy Ghost to write in order the things that “...*are most surely believed among us,*...” which were delivered unto Luke by “...*eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word.*” Certainly much of what Luke wrote in ACTS was told him by the Apostle Paul, the former Saul of Tarsus. In ACTS 5 when Luke records what Gamaliel expressed to the Sanhedrin council in private, who was the “eyewitness” that told Luke what was said here? The former Saul of Tarsus is the prime suspect here, but was Saul of Tarsus present at this council meeting in ACTS 5? There is no way we can say one way or the other, however this Sanhedrin council meeting was held during the time frame when Saul of Tarsus would have been a prize student of Gamaliel. It is not impossible to imagine Gamaliel teaching his students about what was discussed in a private Sanhedrin council meeting, for many of the points he made in ACTS 5:34-39 were facts Gamaliel’s students should be well aware of. Obviously the Holy Ghost inspired Luke to write what is recorded in ACTS 5:34-39, and since Gamaliel died in 52 A.D. well before Luke ever came to Jerusalem, we must note that it was the Apostle Paul, who filled in the missing details of this Sanhedrin council meeting of ACTS 5.

ACTS 5:34 *Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space; 35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. 36 For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. 37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. 38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: 39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.*

Isn’t it interesting how the Lord used the old Pharisee Gamaliel to be the defense attorney for the Apostles here? It truly is amazing what the Lord does for His chosen disciples! Some commentators down through the centuries have imagined that Gamaliel became a believer, however the only One who would know if this be true or not, is the Just One, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the heart examiner. Concerning the Apostles here we must acknowledge that they well knew the facts of PSALMS 118:6 that we also read earlier, which reads: *The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?* The Apostle Paul himself quotes this scripture in HEBREWS 13:6 *So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*

In ACTS 5:38 we read the wisdom of Gamaliel, how he said: *And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone...* . We must also acknowledge that the Sanhedrin council was a rebellious lot, and that they really never were found to follow any words of wisdom, thinking that they were above reproach. Thus we read in ACTS 5:40 that they didn’t even follow Gamaliel’s advice. ACTS 5:40 *And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.* I suppose being beaten in verse 40 was better than being slain in verse 33. Yet they of the Sanhedrin council still didn’t follow Gamaliel’s instruction to ...*Refrain from these men, and let them alone...* ACTS 5:38. In one respect the Sanhedrin did agree with Gamaliel’s advice in the fact that they didn’t put the Apostles to death, but they did not exactly comply with Gamaliel’s advice to let them go. Beating, or whipping was a common form of punishing minor offences by the Jews. Those of the Sanhedrin council reasoned that their “authority” would be despised by the people if they didn’t in some further way punish the Apostles, so they beat them. It seems that the Apostles each received thirty-nine stripes before being let go. In MATTHEW 10:17 Jesus had previously taught His Apostles: *But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues.* One purpose the Sanhedrin hope to accomplish by beating the Apostles was to

embarrass them, and afterwards they also ...commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus... ACTS 5:40. As we read earlier in ACTS 4:18 the Apostles Peter and John were previously commanded by the Sanhedrin council "...not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus... to which Peter replied in ACTS 4:19 ...Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. The same response by the Apostles is found in the concluding verses of ACTS 5.

ACTS 5:41 *And they (the Apostles after being beaten) departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. 42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.*

Instead of stopping the spread of the gospel, just the opposite happened. There is no way the Sanhedrin council ever envisioned that the Apostles would depart from their presence "rejoicing." Peter later wrote the following in 1 PETER 4. 1 PETER 4:12 *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: 13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. 14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. 16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.* Truly here at the end of ACTS 5 we find the name of Jesus Christ magnified, and God glorified!

Furthermore let's acknowledge that in ACTS 5:42 we find: *And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.* Compare this to what is stated in ACTS 2:46 & 47 -- *And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, 47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.* Here in ACTS 5:42 we find that they were still teaching and preaching in the temple, and that they were also still teaching and preaching in every house. We do not read in ACTS 5:42 that they were also still eating their meat with gladness, and singleness of heart. The reason for this will be explained in ACTS 6 where we will find that number of disciples had greatly increased, and not everyone spoke Hebrew, which posed a new challenge to trust the Lord to solve.