

# THE BOOK OF ACTS

## ACTS 5:16-42 | LESSON SUMMARY

### Greater is He

**ACTS 5:17-18**, "But the high priest rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and filled with jealousy they arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison." (ESV)

- Although living under Roman rule, the Sanhedrin still retained a high level of judicial authority
  - Literary and archeological evidence actually suggest they still had the authority to prosecute capital crimes
  - This is especially evident in offenses of a religious nature
- This time Luke specifies a "public prison"
  - Especially brutal

**ACTS 5:19-20**, "But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life." (ESV)

- Rescued!
  - You're free! Now, go and do exactly what got you thrown in prison...
  - Ironically, the captain and the officers can't use force (5:26) because they're afraid of the people
    - The captain and his officers want to kill them (5:33)



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**ACTS 5:29**, "But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men." (ESV)

### Politics

**ACTS 5:34**, "But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while." (ESV)

- Gamaliel is a Pharisee
  - Honored with the highest title "Rabban"
  - Paul's teacher
  - Grandson of Hillel, founder of the more liberal of the two main schools of the Pharisees
- Politically the Sadducees have more power, but don't dare get the Romans involved without support of the Pharisees
  - For all Gamaliel's wisdom, he is still unsure what to make of Jesus here
    - **ACTS 5:39**, "...but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!"

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:** Luke Strelan, *Strange Acts*; Studies in the Cultural World of the Acts of the Apostles, Randall Price, *Zondervan Handbook of Biblical Archeology*, *The Holman Bible Atlas*

