

Such a Time as This

Acts 5:17-20

This was a time of great excitement and wonder for the apostles and those within the early church. Christ had risen and ascended back to the Father, and the Spirit had descended at Pentecost. The Gospel was being preached and countless people were being added to the body of Christ. There was no doubt in Jerusalem that something supernatural was happening, [Vv.12-16](#).

While multitudes were excited and spreading the word, recent events had also caught the attention of the high priest and religious elite. Clearly they did not share the excitement of the multitude. They felt threatened by this new teaching, the Gospel message, and they were determined to do whatever they could to prevent it from spreading further. Our text verses reveal an encounter between the religious elite and the apostles.

Our current circumstances are much different, and yet they bear similarity to the times recorded in our text. The Lord remains seated at the right hand of the Father, and He is still saving those who come to Him by faith. Excitement remains among the church, but we too are facing increased opposition. Many in our day would love to prevent the spread of the Gospel and diminish the influence of the church.

As we examine the [intervals](#) of time within these verses, I want to consider the thought: [Such a Time as This](#). We discover it was:

I. A Time of Opposition (17-18) – These verses offer insight to the opposition facing the apostles. This was not just a moment of disagreement, but a concerted effort to silence their preaching and minimize their influence. Notice:

A. The Cooperation (17a) – [Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, \(which is the sect of the Sadducees.\)](#) It is important to note that the high priest was a Pharisee. When you study the Pharisees and Sadducees, it becomes evident they had many theological differences. While they couldn't agree on much, they did come together in an effort to silence the apostles. They committed to work together in order to preserve their line of thought and livelihood. The apostles stood opposed by every facet of the religious establishment.

- The world around us may not agree on much, but they do agree on opposing the Gospel. Different factions within our society are willing to unite in their efforts to silence the church and minimize our influence. Unfortunately, it appears the church has been forced to stand alone, with few willing to cast their voice in favor of our efforts.

B. The Indignation (17b) – *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.* This was not just a minor disagreement. The high priest, and those who agreed with him, were determined to rid Jerusalem of the Gospel message and all who dared speak of the risen Christ. They were filled with indignation. This literally means “heat.” They possessed a burning rage against the apostles. It speaks of “*jealousy and malice.*” It is clear they were determined to use whatever means necessary to silence the apostles, in an effort to hinder the Gospel from being preached.

- I do not wish to be a prophet of doom in our day, but I do desire to be a voice of reason. I hope you realize the hatred and indignation that exists in our modern culture toward the church. We are viewed as the last obstacle standing in the way of an unhindered liberal and progressive agenda. The world despises the church and those who stand upon biblical truth.

C. The Determination (18) – *And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.* Based on the biblical account, the apostles had done nothing but share the Gospel and heal the sick and those vexed with unclean spirits, through the power and working of the Holy Spirit. Their efforts would have enriched the lives of those they encountered and improved society as a whole. However, their message and miracles resulted in people coming to Christ, the Light of truth. Such transformation in the lives of people caused great concern for the religious establishment. The people were no longer bound by unattainable expectations. The high priest and others were so determined to silence the apostles that they cast them in the common prison.

- Rest assured the world is united in their determination to advance their agenda, whatever it takes. They view the church as a threat, and will try anything imaginable to remove that threat.

II. A Time of Intervention (19) – *But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth.* The opposition didn’t know that God had another plan. He intervened on behalf of the apostles. Notice:

A. The Recognition – *But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors.* The high priest thought he had silenced the apostles and placed them where no one would be able to help them. He had not figured God into the equation. God was aware of their need and stepped in for them.

- Our adversary, and those who serve him, may feel as if they have the upper hand, but we have a source of strength they are unable to match. The Lord knows where we are in the journey, and the struggles we face. It is difficult at times, but we are never alone!

B. The Release (19) – *But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth.* The high priest thought they were out of sight and unable to carry on with their preaching, but God was determined for the Gospel to go forth. The apostles were released from their prison by the mighty hand of God. The schemes of man are no match for the Lord.

- We tend to focus on the circumstances surrounding us and fail to see the power of God at work. We face nothing that He doesn't allow and can't handle. Through His divine power and grace we were delivered from the bonds of sin. A God who can deliver through salvation can surely meet our needs in this life!

III. A Time for Instruction (20) – *Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.* Once the apostles were released from prison, the angel provided specific instructions for them. Consider:

A. The Mandate – *Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people.* They were not expected to return home and live in seclusion. They were commanded to go, boldly stand in the temple and speak. The Lord told them what to do – Go! He told them where to go – the Temple; and He told them who they were to speak – the people.

- I have said many times that we make this much harder than it has to be. We too have a mandate from the Lord. He had given us specific instruction on what we are to do, where we are to go, and to whom we are to speak. *Mat.28:19-20 – Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: [20] Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. 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.*

B. The Message (20) – *Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.* The apostles were not freed to hide in fear, but to proclaim the truth of the Gospel. They were to continue preaching the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for salvation.

- Although it has been thousands of years, this is the message we are mandated to share. The Gospel continues to be the message of life. There is no other means of salvation than by and through the Lord Jesus Christ. We must ensure our generation has the opportunity to hear and respond to the Gospel.

IV. A Time for Devotion (42) – [And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.](#) The apostles responded and remained devoted to the Gospel. Notice:

A. Their Commitment – We find they were daily in the temple. This was not something they chose to do just once in a while, or even just once a week; they were in the temple daily sharing the Gospel. They returned to the belly of the beast, sharing the Gospel around those who had cast them in prison. They were committed to the Lord and His message of salvation.

B. Their Compassion – The apostles not only preached in the temple daily, they shared the Gospel in every home they could. They wanted to ensure everyone in Jerusalem had heard the good news of salvation in Christ. Their hearts were filled with compassion for their countrymen, seeking to reach all they could within the time they had.

C. Their Communication – [They ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.](#) The apostles had one message they were committed to share – Jesus Christ crucified, buried, and risen. They did not waste time with other communications; they preached Jesus!

- A lot of preaching breaks down when compared to biblical models. The apostles were not preaching a “name it and claim it” message. They were not preaching health and wealth. They did not preach legalistic theology and particular preferences of men. They preached Jesus! The world needs the Gospel. Preaching and teaching the Gospel may not draw a crowd, fill the offering plates, or finance immaculate facilities, but it will reach the unsaved for Christ. The Gospel will result in salvation for those who are separated from Christ in sin. That is the message we must major on and commit to sharing!

Conclusion: The society in which we live is much different than in the apostle’s day, but many similarities remain. We face opposition from those who want to silence our voice, and yet we have the same power working in us through the Spirit. The mandate to share the Gospel has not changed and it never will. It is the timeless message that results in salvation for those who receive it by faith. We must be as the apostles and remain committed to sharing the good news!

If you are struggling in service to the Lord, come to Him for strength and guidance. If you are yet unsaved, respond the call of the Lord by faith, and be saved today!