

# Gamaliel: Leave It Alone

## INTRODUCTION.

- A. There are many Bible characters which bring with them many unanswered questions. For instance, we have often wondered is men such as Felix, Festus, and Agrippa every obeyed Jesus' call to salvation.
- B. One such man that has left us with unanswered question is Gamaliel.
- C. With this lesson, we will examine what we know about Gamaliel, the teacher of Paul, and what lessons we can learn from his life.

## I. WHO WAS GAMALIEL?

- A. Some background information on Gamaliel.
  - 1. Gamaliel was a doctor of the law and the grandson of Hillel.
  - 2. Gamaliel was a member of the Sanhedrin.
    - a. The Sanhedrin council was composed of seventy men plus the highpriest.
    - b. The Sanhedrin held the final word on matters of religion and morality.
  - 3. Gamaliel was a Pharisee
    - a. The Pharisees maintained control of the synagogues and were "legalists" in their approach to the Law.
    - b. The Pharisees believe in the resurrection.
    - c. The Pharisees loved the Law more than God. They would make laws and multiply the burden upon the common Jew.
  - 4. Gamaliel was held in honor among the people. (Acts 5:34)
  - 5. Gamaliel taught the apostle Paul. (Acts 22:1-3)
  - 6. Gamaliel died in 50 A.D. The state of his soul is unknown.
    - a. Jewish tradition says that Gamaliel remained a faithful Pharisee until he died. The Talmud reads: "Since Rabban Gamaliel died, the glory of the Law has ceased."
    - b. Other ancient tradition says that Gamaliel and his son may have obeyed the gospel with Nicodemus.

- c. However, there is no certain record of his conversion. It is an unanswered question.

## II. GAMALIEL'S ADVICE.

- A. The apostles had been commanded by the Sanhedrin council not to preach Jesus. However, the apostles had no choice but to preach Jesus. They were arrested by the council. (Acts 5:25-33)
  1. Peter explained that they had no choice but to obey God rather than men. (v. 29-32)
  2. The council was furious and plotted to kill them. (v. 33)
- B. Gamaliel, a teacher of the law and respected by the people, commanded the apostles to be put out and he addressed the council. (Acts 5:34-39)
  1. Gamaliel's advice was real simple. Leave the apostles alone and take a wait and see approach.
  2. He reasoned that, based on other examples, that if the apostles teaching was not from God, then it would be put down. However, if it was from God, then they could not fight against God.

## III. THE PROBLEM WITH GAMALIEL'S ADVICE.

- A. If the teachings of the apostles was a false doctrine, then the pharisees, as followers of God, were obligated to refute the teaching. We are obligated to refute false doctrine.
  1. Romans 16:17
  2. 1 Timothy 6:12
  3. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5
  4. James 4:7
- B. Another mistake made by Gamaliel was the assumption that every false doctrine would be put down. There are several modern day examples of false doctrines which have lasted:
  1. Mormonism
  2. Jehovah's Witnesses
  3. Mohammedanism
  4. Catholicism
- C. There are times when doing nothing is the wisest choice to keep from wasting your

energy and effort.

1. People who are trying to get attention.
2. People who are nothing but complainers.
3. Matthew 7:6; Matthew 15:14; Titus 3:9

#### IV. ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS.

- A. In his advice, Gamaliel did state one truth. Gamaliel said, *“but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God.”* (Acts 5:39, NKJV)
  1. No matter how many people deny the Truth, the Truth will never change and will never fail.
  2. Romans 3:3-4; 1 Peter 1:22-25
- B. Imagine what influence that Gamaliel might have had if he had converted to the Truth?
  1. Because of Gamaliel’s position and respect, he MIGHT have been able to influence others to Christ.
  2. You will never know how much influence you obedience to the Gospel will have on other people. It is all a part of letting our light shine before men. (C.f Matthew 5:14-16)

#### CONCLUSION.

- A. Who are we going to be like?
  1. Are we going to be like the apostles who preached the word, even when they were told not to preach?
  2. Are we going to be like Gamaliel and suggest that we do not confront the false teachers?
- B. Did Gamaliel every become a Christian, a child of God? We do not know. However, it is a question that you can ask yourself.
  1. Are you a Christian, a child of God? If not, then take the necessary steps and do what Gamaliel may have never done.
  2. If you are a Christian, then ask yourself who are you more like? Gamaliel or the apostles?

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