

## **World Upside Down: The Book of Acts**

Acts 5:12-42

- 1. What games are you playing to stay entertained during this shelter-in-place?**
- 2. The season of unstoppable signs & wonders wasn't interminable (vv. 12-13).**

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

- Acts 8:1

[21] When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, [22] strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

- Acts 14:21-22

The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works.

- 2 Corinthians 12:12

- 3. With echoes of the empty tomb, the Apostles aren't held in prison (vv. 17-26).**

[1] Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. [2] And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.

- Matthew 28:1-2

[11] While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. [12] And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers [13] and said, “Tell people, ‘His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ [14] And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” [15] So they took the money and did as they were directed.

- Matthew 28:11-15

#### **4. The vindicated Lord requires single-hearted loyalty (vv. 27-32).**

[6] Then these high officials and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, “O King Darius, live forever! [7] All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. [8] Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked.” [9] Therefore King Darius signed the document and injunction. [10] When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously. (ESV)

- Daniel 6:6-10

“Since your most serene majesty and your high mightinesses require of me a simple, clear and direct answer, I will give one, and it is this: I cannot submit my faith either to the pope or to the council, because it is as clear as noonday that they have fallen into error and even into glaring inconsistency with themselves. If, then, I am not convinced by proof from Holy Scripture, or by cogent reasons, if I am not satisfied by the very text I have cited, and if my judgment is

not in this way brought into subjection to God's word, I neither can nor will retract anything; for it cannot be either safe or honest for a Christian to speak against his conscience. Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise; God help me! Amen.”

- Martin Luther at the Diet of Worms, 1521

## **5. Christians are nevertheless called upon to submit to the ruling authorities when they are not directly compromising our confession.**

[1] Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. [2] Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. [3] For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, [4] for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. [5] Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience.

- Romans 13:1-5

[The Lutheran princes] condemn also those who do not place evangelical perfection in the fear of God and in faith, but in forsaking civil offices, for the Gospel teaches an eternal righteousness of the heart. Meanwhile, it does not destroy the State or the family, but very much requires that they be preserved as ordinances of God, and that charity be practiced in such ordinances. Therefore, Christians are necessarily bound to obey their own magistrates and laws save only when commanded to sin; for then they ought to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29).

- Augsburg Confession XVI.4-7

## **6. Gamaliel evinces the taste-and-see approach to apologetics (vv. 33-39).**

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good!  
Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!”  
- Psalm 34:8

“[Gamaliel’s gambit] constituted an appeal to the workings of the divine economy in human history as a form of revelation.”  
- Jaroslav Pelikan

## **7. In the upside-down world of the Kingdom, suffering is a source of joy (vv. 40-42).**

[11] “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. [12] Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”  
- Jesus, in Matthew 5:11-12

[2] Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, [3] for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. (ESV)  
- James 1:2-3

## **8. Witnesses of Jesus play follow the Leader.**

“To be a witness...is to embody the cruciform pattern that culminates in resurrection.”  
- Kavin Rowe