

Should Christians Disobey the Government?

I. The _____ of the Council (vv. 15-16)

A. The Problem of the _____ (4:15-16) They could not _____ the men, and they could not _____ the miracle.

B. The _____ Admission (4:16) The text says it was "evident." The Greek word here is phaneros (φανερός). It is also used in John 1:5 "And the light _____ the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it." (John 1:5, NKJV) Literally, this miracle of the healing of the lame man "shined in" so that all could _____ it. It was a powerful _____. And the council themselves could not deny it.

C. The _____ Acclamation (4:16) The miracle had already done its _____. The people were glorifying God. Word had spread throughout the city.

The devil has used _____ tricks from his playbook on the Church. He has attacked it from _____ by persecutions and he has attacked it from _____ by popularity. He does not mind if the Church grows popular, so long as the numbers _____ its message and helps it embrace the things of the world. So, the Devil felt he had it _____ ways. The government could threaten, and the crowd could weaken the Church from the inside.

This is very important, and it is a clue to understanding the nature of every conflict between the Church and the State: **the State almost never _____ the Church on the grounds of _____.** It opposes the Church on the grounds of _____. The question is never really, "Is this _____?" The question is always, "Who is in _____?"

II. The _____ by the Council: (v.v.17-18) Now we come to the _____ of the matter. The government is about to make a ruling that would directly _____ the Great Commission that the Lord Jesus Christ had given the disciples before He ascended back to heaven. They were going to attempt to prohibit or limit the impact of the _____ by ordering them to keep their mouths _____. Let's examine their thinking.

A. The _____: (4:17a) Israel's spiritual leaders viewed Christ and His message as a virus that must be stopped before it infected the whole community.

Christ had given all the signs the Jews had been looking for that He was Messiah, yet He was utterly rejected despite of the _____ because He did not match up to Jewish _____.

B. The _____: (4:17b) The assumption of the Sanhedrin was that the disciples were _____ like everybody in the world that they knew. They assumed that Christians could be _____ and would knuckle under because they felt that they were _____ by the same sense of self-preservation that the world embraces.

C. The _____ (4:18) The council does not argue with the _____. They do not attempt to disprove the miracle. They simply issue a _____: Stop. Don't speak. Don't teach. Not in this name

III. The _____ of the Christians: (4:19-20) The Apostles' response involved a principle that is trans-dispensational, that is, applicable to every dispensation: God's people are to _____ Him when His Word or commands _____ with the commands of men.

- **They did not _____ disrespectfully to the judges.** There is no defiance for the sake of defiance here. They understood that governmental authority is ordained by God and deserves respect within its proper sphere.
- **They did not organize _____ or form a resistance movement.** They did not attempt to overthrow the Sanhedrin by political means.
- **They did not sink into their _____.** They did not respond with bitterness or self-pity.
- But — and this is the critical point — **they did not _____ the command.** They refused to be silent.

IV. The _____ of the Council: (4:21-22) The final scene reveals the council's complete impotence. They threaten further, and then they let them go. Why? Two reasons.

- First, because of the _____.
- Second, because they had no _____ grounds for punishment. The Apostles had broken no law.

Scriptural Applications

- **First, Christians should be the _____ citizens in the nation.**
- **Second, there is a _____ to that submission — and the limit is the clear command of God.**
- **Third, civil disobedience must be done with _____, not rebellion.**
- **Fourth, the believer's _____ to speak comes from what he has experienced.**

- Fifth, God's people must be careful not to _____ political preference with divine command.
- Sixth, the Sanhedrin's prohibition reminds us that the enemies of the _____ are fighting against the evidence, not just against us.