

“CHALLENGES”

READING: Luke 21:12-15

“...for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict.”

INTRODUCTION:

A “challenge” is meant to test the make-up and resilience of your faith.

The early church, as an assembly of believers, was confronted with such a monumental test, and because they had the apostles with them, they came through it with “flying colours”. One of their number, however, won the battle but lost his life in the war for truth and Christ.

if the devil cannot take your faith, he will quite happily take your flesh (through death) Fortunately Jesus overcame the devil and his devices (**Hebrews 2:14-15**) which then allowed His followers to face death without apprehension.

DISCUSSION:

The first challenge came by means of trying to conceal the truth from man and God. It was clearly demonstrated to the entire church, that trying to deceive God is not possible (**Daniel 2:20-22**). A person might be successful attempting to hide something from man, but not from God. God certainly views such conduct in a very serious light, as evidenced by the fact that both husband and wife, who so colluded, lost their lives, for their deceit.

The only way satan can bring any charges against a child of God, is through lies (**John 8:44; 1 John 2:21**)

When the apostles earlier mentioned that God only gives the Spirit to those who obey Him (**Acts 5:32**) they laid down a foundation principle of truth, which really annoyed and hurt the Jewish leaders, as there was no way anyone could ignore the miracles the saints did by means of the Holy Spirit.

The conclusion drawn from this had to be: that the saints of Jesus testified of the truth, and not the Jewish leaders. (**1 John 1:1-3**)

CONCLUSION:

God used death to condemn the wicked and later (in the next chapter) He used the death of His saint to vindicate the righteous and confirm the truth.

In both instances the devil and his devices were defeated

(**Romans 16:20; James 4:7**) when satan and his allies tried to get Stephen to answer to the false charges. (**1 Peter 3:15-16; Colossians 4:5-6**)

Whom do you want to resist and to whom do you want to submit?

(**Romans 6:16**)