

LEAVE THESE MEN ALONE

“Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God.” (Acts 5:38-39)

These are the words of Gamaliel, the famous Pharisee, who was well respected by all the people. Even Paul had once been his student. His advice seems wise and spiritual, but really is not. Leaving the apostles alone does not result in salvation. If Jesus is the Son of God He cannot be merely left alone. No matter what trends are popular in the modern world, lukewarmness is not a virtue in the eyes of God (Rev. 3:16).

Many Jewish leaders had come to believe in Jesus but would not confess Him. John stated it like this: **“Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved praise from men more than praise from God.” (John 12:42-43)**

While God will be the ultimate Judge of these men, confession is still an integral part of salvation. With the heart man believes, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Rom. 10:9,10). Whoever confesses Jesus on earth, Jesus will confess before the Father in heaven (Matt. 10:32). God is a jealous God and those who are ashamed of Jesus will not be saved!

In Acts 6:7 we are told that a large number of priests became obedient to the faith. We can only hope that Gamaliel was in that group. If he died without getting involved with the apostles, he died without the promise of salvation. The advice of Gamaliel, however, is much en vogue in modern America. We have become a nation of spectators. We watch crimes unfold on television from the safety of our couch. We see poverty and war from a safe distance. We may mutter a few words of advice or criticism, but we do our best to not get involved.

The philosophy of non involvement is epitomized by the death of Kitty Genovese. On March 13, 1964 this 28 year old woman was coming home from work at 3:00 in the morning. She parked her red Fiat in the darkness and began walking the 100 feet to her apartment. Suddenly a man overtook her and began stabbing her with a knife. Kitty screamed: “Oh, my God, he stabbed me! Please help me!”

Lights in the apartment building came on. A man opened his window and shouted “Let that girl alone!” The attacker walked away. Windows slammed shut and lights went back out. The victim staggered toward her apartment, but the killer returned and stabbed her again.

“I’m dying” she cried. Windows opened again. The attacker entered his car and drove away. By this time Kitty had crawled inside the front door of the apartment house at 82-62 Austin St. But the killer returned again, found his victim sprawled on the floor, and stabbed her again. This time he killed her. It was not until 3:50 a.m. that anyone even bothered to call the police. They arrived in only two minutes and discovered the body. Thirty-eight neighbors had witness at least one of the three attacks which took place during a 35 minute period of time. Had someone bothered to call the police earlier Kitty Genovese’s life probably could have been saved.

The killer was 29 year old Winston Moseley. He not only confessed to killing Kitty Genovese, but two other women as well. He chose women to kill because “they were easier and didn’t fight back!”

There is indeed an “appearance of wisdom” in not getting involved. On Judgment Day, however, only those who dared involvement will be saved! Jesus said: **“I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.” (Matt 25:35-36)**

Please get involved. Be a Good Samaritan and take a chance on putting the needs of others before your own comfort and security. When you stand before God in Judgement, you will be glad you obeyed Jesus and not Gamaliel.