

The Book of Acts  
Chapter 4

*Acts 4:10-12*

*10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.*

*11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.*

*12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

I. Review of chapter 3

1. Acts chapter 3 began with a prayer meeting and a miracle and ended with preaching and an altar call.
2. Peter and John were interrupted on their journey to prayer meeting by a lame beggar, but rather than giving him silver or gold, Peter raised the lame man up and he was healed.
3. This miracle became more notable because the man walked and leaped through the temple, drawing a crowd of people who gathered to see the sight.
4. This was the man whom they had seen crippled and begging daily in front of the temple over a span of decades but was now leaping and shouting for joy.
5. Inquiring minds wanted to know how this was so.
6. So Peter stood up and preached a gospel message, very similar to the message he had preached on the Day of Pentecost, including repentance, seeking mercy and forgiveness, and times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord by Jesus Christ Himself coming into them.
7. And it was this gathering crowd that caused the intervention of the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees.

II. Acts Chapter 4

III. The First Persecution (Verses 1-4)

A. Religious leaders try to stop the preaching in Jesus' name

1. **[1] What persecution resulted from the healing of the lame man?**
2. The apostles' first persecution came as the result of the healing of the lame man and Peter's preaching Jesus to the gathering crowd.
3. The ruling body of the Jews (Sanhedrin) used the occasion of the excited crowd as an excuse to arrest Peter and John, but they were mostly upset because they had preached the resurrection of Jesus.
4. **[2] Why were the members of the Sanhedrin grieved because the Apostles preached the resurrection of Jesus?**
5. The preaching of the resurrection cut them deeply because they were responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus.
6. It was these same elders who had influenced the common people to ask Pilate to crucify Jesus and release to them Barabbas:

*Mark 15:11-13*

*11 But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.*

*12 And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him*

whom ye call the King of the Jews?  
13 And they cried out again, Crucify him.

7. And Peter's preaching the resurrection of Jesus, reminding them and the crowd of their guilt in killing Him:

*Acts 4:1-4*

*4 And as they spake unto the people, the **priests**, and the **captain of the temple**, and the **Sadducees**, came upon them,*

*2 Being **grieved** that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.*

*3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.*

B. Revival anyway!

1. But the religious leaders were losing their influence over the people because they had seen the miracle of the healing and believed the Apostles' preaching:

*Acts 4:4 Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.*

2. Yet verse 3 says while Peter was yet preaching, they sent officers who arrested him and John and put them in hold (prison), where they were kept overnight.
3. But their persecutors soon realized they could not stop the work of the Holy Ghost by imprisoning the preachers.

C. An unstoppable church

1. And we are in the same position today. Not Washington, Wall Street, the Vatican, or Hollywood can stop the truth from being preached.

2. Years later when Paul was a prisoner in Rome, he wrote to Timothy about his recent arrested for preaching the gospel:

*2 Tim 2:9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but **the word of God is not bound**.*

3. I may be bound, but the word of God is not!

4. And during his first imprisonment in Rome he was permitted to live in his own hired house and preach to all who came to him

*Acts 28:31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, **no man forbidding him**.*

5. It was Paul's winner attitude that kept him from feeling like a victim of bad circumstances:

*Phil 1:12-14*

*12 But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me **have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel**;*

*13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places;*

*14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, **waxing confident** by my bonds, are **much more bold** to speak the word without fear.*

6. He willingly suffered these adversities because he recognized it encouraged others to boldly preach the gospel.

7. And likewise, Peter and John were also happy to spend a night in prison in order to see five thousand people saved!

IV. The Trial of Peter and John (Verses 5-14)

- A. Accused by religious authorities who condemned Jesus

1. On the morning following the arrest of Peter and John, the rulers of the Jews called a special session of their religious court to try them.
  2. In addition to those mentioned in verse 1, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, notice who else was there:  
*Acts 4:6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.*
  3. Do any of those names sound familiar? In John 18:12-14 and 24, Annas and Caiaphas, and the captain were part of the crowd who arrested and convicted Jesus for claiming to be the Son of God.
  4. **[3] What question of the council was the occasion for Peter's third sermon?**
  5. The council had arrested and imprisoned the apostles, now they were determined to condemn the Apostles. The temple officials asked this pointed question:  
*Acts 4:7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?*
  6. They were basically accusing them of acting outside of their priestly authority in performing the healing of the lame man.
  7. They considered themselves to be the sole authority in all religious matters and considered it a crime to refuse to submit under their authority.
  8. "It's ain't smoke unless it's coming out of my chimney."
- B. Testifying of the gospel
1. **[4] What was the theme of Peter's sermon to the members of the council?**
  2. It was Peter, the apostle with the keys, who answered the question of authority, and again saw another opportunity to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in this potentially life-threatening setting.  
*Acts 4:9-10*  
*9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;*  
*10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.*
  3. That is not a line out of the book, "How to win friends and influence people." Again, keep in mind, the people Peter and John were testifying before had charged Jesus of blasphemy and demanded His death perhaps only a few months earlier.
  4. And to make the point clearer, Peter, while preaching under the influence of the Holy Ghost, interpreted Psalm 118:22 for the high priest, saying it was fulfilled in how they had rejected Jesus:  
*Acts 4:11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.*
  5. **[6] By what text did Peter make the gospel of Jesus mandatory?**
  6. Peter went further to make it crystal clear to the temple leadership, that Jesus was the only way to salvation:  
*Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*
  7. Peter was preaching Jesus as the One of whom Isaiah prophesied,  
*Isa 12:2 Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.*

8. This was as significant as when Jesus affirmed to this same council that He was the Son of God. Here **Peter equated the God of the scriptures with Jesus.**
9. This was a major theological point Peter was making to the theology experts of the day. Jesus is God! Jesus is salvation!

C. Their defense: a healed man and Holy Ghost boldness

1. **[5] What principal witness did the apostles have for their defense before the council?**

2. But testifying to Peter and John's bold defense standing right in front of them, was this former crippled man. Here was infallible proof of a notable and undeniable miracle performed in that exalted name of Jesus:

*Acts 4:14, 16*

*14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.*

*16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it.*

3. **[7] Why did the members of the council consider Peter and John to be unlearned and ignorant men? For what did they marvel?**

4. The temple leaders marveled at the boldness of these men.
5. They had called Peter and John before them to humiliate them before their wise council, for they perceived them to be simple, uneducated prisoners, who would beg for their mercy.
6. They knew they were unlearned and ignorant fishermen from Galilee, but now they were marveling at Peter lecturing them on high matters of the scripture.

*Acts 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and **they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.***

7. But this was not the same Peter who a few weeks before had, in fear, denied his Lord (Luke 22:54-62).
8. And this was not the same John who had wanted to call fire from heaven to consume the Samaritans (Luke 9:51-56), or who had arrogantly asked to sit next to Jesus in the first place in the kingdom (Mark 10:35-45).
9. No. These men were now boldly proclaiming the gospel through the power of the Holy Ghost.
10. The rulers were left speechless at the miracle and the boldness.

V. The Verdict of the Trial (Verses 15-22)

1. After Peter made his defense, the prisoners were sent out of the room while the council, as the jury, sought to reach a verdict in the case.

2. **[9] How did they attempt to intimidate the apostles?**

3. As they conferred among themselves, they were forced to acknowledge that they could not deny this remarkable miracle, so they decided only to threaten them.

*Acts 4:17-18*

*17 But **that it** [the gospel of Jesus] **spread no further** among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.*

*18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.*

4. **[10] What was the response of Peter and John to their demand?**

5. Still under the influence, Peter and John were not afraid of their threats, but leaned on a truth obvious to all of those on the council:

*Acts 4:19-20*

*19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.*

*20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.*

6. Truth is the final defense that cannot be contradicted.

7. **[8] Why did they not keep them in prison?**

8. The elders decided to release them. Not for the truth they had just heard, or for the sake of justice, but because of the fear of the people who had seen this undeniable miracle done in Jesus' name by these men.

*Acts 4:21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done.*

VI. A Pentecostal Prayer Meeting (Verses 23-31)

1. **[11] What was the reaction of the company of disciples when Peter and John reported the proceedings and the outcome of their trial?**

2. *Acts 4:23-24*

*23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.*

*24 And when they heard that, **they lifted up their voice to God** with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:*

3. The reaction of these Spirit-filled saints was to lift their voices together to praise and magnify the Lord. Their faith was strengthened in the knowledge that the great God who had created all things had been mindful of His servants to deliver them from their persecutors.

4. Jesus had told them this would happen:

*Luke 12:11-12*

*11 And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say:*

*12 For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.*

5. **[12] What fulfillment of prophecy did they recognize in their persecution?**

6. Not only had Jesus foretold this persecution, but they also saw David's prophesy in Psalm 2:1-2 fulfilled that day.

*Acts 4:25-26*

*25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?*

*26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.*

7. Since the day of Pentecost, the Spirit had been unfolding to them interpretations and fulfillment of Old Testament Scriptures.

8. In verse 27 they pointed out some rulers who had gathered against Jesus in His crucifixion: Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, and even their own people.

9. **[13] What was the nature of the prayer of the company of disciples?**

10. But this persecuted church, instead of trying to flee persecution for preaching the gospel, they prayed for boldness to keep preaching it:

*Acts 4:29-30*

*29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,*

*30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.*

11. They prayed that the Lord would continue to work in them to heal and to show signs and wonders by the power of the name of Jesus Christ.
12. **[14] What was God's answer to their prayer?**
13. *Acts 4:31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.*

## VII. Having All Things Common (Verses 32-37)

1. Chapter 4 ends by introducing the setting of the first tragedy in the church that comes in Chapter 5.
2. While God did not command it, nor did the Apostles suggest it, but the love of God in this new church moved them to sell their possessions and share the proceeds with the church.
3. And for this brief time, the early church apparently lived as one family sharing all their possessions:  
*Acts 4:32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.*
4. This is likely the same event we read about in Acts 2:  
*Acts 2:44-45*  
*44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;*  
*45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.*
5. The spirit of this move was right, but this communal living was only temporary.
6. For as Jesus had declared many times, taking the gospel into all the world was the commission of the church, not sheltering in place.
7. **[15] What was said of Barnabas in the conclusion of this chapter?**
8. But it was in the midst this widespread generosity that we are introduced to a very special man who would become a very important evangelist in the Gentile world.  
*Acts 4:36-37*  
*36 And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation [encouragement],) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus,*  
*37 Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.*
9. Barnabas becomes an important character in several stories later in Acts, and all reflect his great love and interest in others as he gave himself to serve the needs of people, both physical and spiritual.