

Brookland Baptist Church
Bible Study
Rev. Dr. Charles B. Jackson, Sr., Pastor
Rev. Dr. James A. Jamison, Facilitator

Lecture XI

April 27, 2022

The Book of Acts
Acts 4:1-13

Acts 4:1

1 “While Peter and John were speaking to the people, the leading priests, the captain of the Temple guard, and some of the Sadducees came over to them”.

A huge throng of thousands had rushed to see the cripple who had been healed and to hear the message being proclaimed by Peter and John who had such power.

The excitement and noise were bound to attract the attention and bring the temple authorities to the scene. What they saw and heard disturbed them to no end. They thought they had eliminated the “Jesus movement” eight weeks earlier when they had crucified Jesus. They had heard about the preaching incident several days earlier and how excited the people had become. Now, Peter and John were publicly preaching that God had raised Jesus from the dead. And they were preaching, of all places, in the temple precincts

Acts 4:2-4 -

2 “They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.” 3 “They arrested them and, since it was already evening, jailed them until morning.” 4 “But many of the people who heard their message believed it, so that the number of believers totaled about five thousand men, not counting women and children.”

The officials were threatened by the preaching of Jesus being raised from the dead. They knew that it was the nature of people to respond to hope, especially to great hope. They also knew that great excitement existed within the people’s heart for the coming of the Messiah and that it would take only a small spark of hope to set the excitement aflame. They just could not allow Jesus to be preached, not the hope of His resurrection, for the resurrection meant that all men who followed Him would arise. People ached and were ripe for such a message.

The Sadducees were sure that if the apostles were allowed to go on unchecked, riots and civil disorder might follow, with disastrous consequences to their status. Therefore, they proposed to nip this movement in the bud; and that is why Peter and John were so promptly arrested. It is a terrible example of a party of men who, in order to retain their vested interests, would not themselves listen to the truth or give anyone else a chance to hear it.

Acts 4:5 –

5 “The next day the council of all the rulers and elders and teachers of religious law met in Jerusalem.”

The men who gathered to interrogate Peter and John were a “who’s who” of the most powerful and prominent religious leaders of Israel. These men knew the Old Testament Scriptures in painstaking detail. They were completely immersed in a world of religious rituals. They could argue theology for hours on end. The only problem was, that they were spiritually lost! God, in the person of Jesus Christ, had been in their very presence, and they had missed him. Worse than that, they had killed him! Now they were blindly trying to silence the messengers of Christ.

Acts 4:6-7 -

6 “Annas the high priest was there, along with Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and other relatives of the high priest.” 7 “They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: “By what power or what name did you do this?”

“By what name” refers to exorcism practices. They wanted to know what formula Peter and John had used. Their concern was more about the apostles’ teaching, but they began their questioning with the miracle, for the healed man was there as well. The actions and words of Peter and John threatened these religious leaders who, for the most part, were more interested in their reputations and positions than in the glory of God.

Acts 8-10 –

8 “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people!” 9 “If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed,” 10 “then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.”

Jesus had told his disciples, “On my account, you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time, you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.”

Peter, the rough ex-fisherman, stood before a room of disapproving and scowling faces; and, filled with the Holy Spirit, began to speak. There are two kinds of courage: reckless courage that is unaware of the dangers it faces, and the courage that knows the peril and yet is undaunted. (Matthew 10:18-20).

Acts 4:11 –

11 “This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone. Has become the chief cornerstone.’”

Peter quoted a familiar Old Testament passage, Psalm 118:22, and invested it with new meaning. Most Jews regarded their nation, Israel, as the stone chosen by God but rejected by the nations. Jesus had referred to himself as the stone which was rejected by the builders. Mark 12:10- 11. The cornerstone was the most important stone in a building, used as the standard to make sure that the other stones of the building were straight and level. Israel’s leadership, like the builders looking for an appropriate cornerstone, would toss Jesus aside because he didn’t seem to have the right qualifications.

Acts 4:12 –

12 “There is salvation in no one else! There is no other name in all of heaven for people to call on to save them.”

Peter and John proclaimed salvation. Peter had just shared the source of his power, the name of Jesus Christ. He now proclaimed the salvation that is in Jesus. That same Jesus, the long-awaited Messiah, can heal all people spiritually. Peter did not compromise or soft-pedal his answer. Salvation does not come from being a descendant of Abraham or by following the Law of Moses. The clear gospel teaching is that there is salvation in no one else but Jesus (John 14:6). How, then, are people saved? By calling on the name of Jesus.

Acts 4:13

13 The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men who had had no special training. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus.

Christ had originally chosen the Twelve so that they “might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority” Here that purpose reached fruition. Peter and John, fishermen by trade, had never received formal theological or rhetorical training in the rabbinical schools; they were ordinary men who had had no special training. Yet their testimony before the members of the council was astonishing. Peter and John were bold, composed, confident, and undaunted in their defense. As the apostles stood there with the healed cripple, speaking with authority, the members of the Council recognized them as men who had been with Jesus. Their boldness was possible only because they were filled with the Holy Spirit.