

Acts 4.1-22

Guilty! Kindness to a Cripple!?

TODAY 76 countries Xtians suffer High & Extreme levels Persecution

> ACTS: Series of FIRSTS for Church of Risen JESUS > Persecution

Ch 4: Beginning of 2000 yrs of PERSECUTION angst Xtian Church

24 more Chpts in Bk > 21 written Context of Active Persecution

Acts 4 - JOY & Excitement filled SOME PARTS of City of Jerusalem

LAME Man HEALED – Jumping and Praising God – People AMAZED

1000's had HOPE beyond DEATH with News of RESURRECTION!

EVERYONE in Jerusalem should be EXCEEDINGLY HAPPY? Right??

NOT so FAST!! NOT Everyone in Jerusalem Giving HIGH-FIVES....

1. Council in Calamity

a. Crisis - NOT Clear if Peter's Sermon ch 3: Interrupted or Concluded?

v. 1 The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people.

Temple Guards worked for High Priest: Supervised Activities in Temple

Majority Priests Council > Sadducees / Wealthy, Politically Influential

vs. 5,6 ...rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest...Caiaphas, John, Alexander & others high priest's family

Annas – High Priest Emeritus > Deposed by Romans, Popular w/ Jews

Caiphas – Son-in-Law of A. > INSTALLED by Rome as High Priest

John & Alexander? Today Not Know 21st C > WELL KNOWN 1st C

COUNCIL = FAMILY Business – 5 of Annas' Sons Held Office

b. Conflict – Council tasked to GUARD TEMPLE of God

v. 3 They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day.

Council were RESPONSIBLE to be SHEPHERDS of FLOCK of Israel

It was RIGHT for them to INVESTIGATE – New Teachers / Teachings

v. 2 *They were greatly disturbed* because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.

1st Reason UPSET by Preaching of Resurrection > Just KILLED the Guy
 Same Leaders Sentenced Jesus MONTHS Before > that Maki Die DEAD!
 Now take FORCEFUL ACTION to STOP Spreading of this NAME

2nd Reason Preaching of Resurr > Challenged BAD Theol. Sadducees

The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor spirits, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all. Acts 23.8

According to their teaching, Souls perish together with Bodies.

That's Why! SAD U SEE! Only this Life: No Resurrection, No Afterlife

c. Control 1st Official Recognition of CHURCH – Followers of Way

v. 7 They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

LAST word v. 7 Original Gk YOU = "What power? YOU Nobodies!?"

Problem w/ Apostles – PREACHING Challenged Council's Authority

Main Reason for Persecution of Church > Not Theology but POWER

d. Confused vs. 14-16 But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. "What are we going to do with these men? Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle, and we cannot deny it."

CLOSED Door > EMBARRASSED >> CLOSED Minds & BIBLES

How can we IGNORE the Scripture AND the SIGN of this Healed Man!?

v. 22 For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

LUKE Reliable Historian > Challenged by Critics – Never Contradicted!

v. 15ff Even Accurately records their WHISPERS behind Locked Doors!

Pharisee Saul of Tarsus played on that Team Then > maybe had iPhone?

I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning... Luke 1.3

2. Courageous Criminals

a. Fixed on the Scriptures

Ancient Picture of EARLIEST Gatherings of CHRIST FOLLOWERS
they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching Acts 2.42

Scriptures are Central Piece of FURNITURE in the HOUSE of God

Peter's 1st 2 Sermons on Street to Curious, Some-what Interested

NOW before Religious Leaders – ANTAGONISTIC, even HOSTILE

Some of the greatest opponents of renewal movements within the church have been its leaders.
Ajith Fernando

Sometimes the Xtian ARMY SHOOTS its own Wounded

v. 3 PETER and JOHN > Spend NIGHT in SANHEDRIN SUITES

Complimentary Breakfast – BREAD and WATER

STILL FIXED on the Word > FEARLESS enough to be FUNNY!

AMBIGUOUS Charge Against them > Peter Clarifies what EXACTLY

vs. 8-11 "Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, 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. He is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone."

Judge asks, "What is CHARGE against Accused > **Kindness to Cripple!**

STONE: Psalm 118 One of FAVORITE Texts of EARLY Church

REJECTED the CORNERSTONE of God's HOUSEHOLD

3rd Sermon of Peter – Again tells Listeners > YOU Killed your Messiah!

b. Filled with the Spirit

Event of Pentecost > Baptism of Spirit – Once for All Historic Event

Needed FRESH ANOINTING before this FIRST ATTACK

v. 8 Peter, *filled with the Holy Spirit*, said to them: "Rulers and elders!....

Not Long before Jesus Stood Before Sanhedrin > P & J reminded of Him

v. 13 When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

Followers of Jesus the Nazarene – but he was DEAD!

Fishermen – NOT Authorized Leaders or Professional Scribes or Teachers

Uneducated Laymen more Power & Authority than Entire Council

2 Fishermen w/ No Grad Degrees Toe to Toe 71 Scholars of Sanhedrin

God used Unschooled Preachers > Dwight Moody, Charles Spurgeon

NO TITLES – NO TRAINING – ONLY THE TRUTH of GOD

v. 13 Deep Impression on ME as College Student – Wanted to Serve Lord

Do I Really Need to FINISH College and THEN 3 yrs SEMINARY??

Peter & John Filled with Holy Spirit TWICE in ONE DAY!!

v. 31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

c. Focused on Salvation – Peter wants Council SAVED Not Shamed!

v. 12 “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

Jesus Name Makes ALL Things Right – Restores, Redeems, Renews

3. Christ-followers in Conflict

a. Citizenship – Hold 2 Kingdom Passports > Sometimes Worlds Collide

vs. 17,18 But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn these men to speak no longer to anyone in this name.” Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

Xtian > Submits to Governing Authorities, Seen thru Whole Bible

Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.
1 Peter 2.17

All Xtians Every Country Conflict: Israel, Palestine, China, Iraq, Russia

Political Disagreements > Distant 2nd to UNITY Believers in Christ

Hope your Xtian Citizenship Far More Impt than Color of your FLAG

1st Violation > Council gives WARNING / 2nd Violation PUNISHED

ORDER No More Preaching, IF Preach Again = CONTEMPT of Court
NOT Discredit their Message > Just Denied Rights of People to HEAR

2 Girls Hoover HS/ Rivals Me & John to School Dance: Good Fun!

Band took Break – John & I grabbed Microphone – Went on STAGE

CROWD just Waiting to HEAR John & I PREACH Gospel of Jesus

Started – Stopped by Dance Chaperones / “Tomorrow is YOUR Day!”

NOT INSIST on Preaching at HS Saturday Dance? Church in Glendale!

Different here in Acts > Story of FIRST & Only CHURCH in Jerusalem

NO OTHER Church/Preachers – Only Opportunity for Hearing Gospel

Argue KIDS – Non Xtian Homes in Public Schools USA Same Isolation

They Murdered the Messiah > NOW they Muzzle His Messengers

God’s clear command trumps every human instruction that contradicts it. Dennis Johnson

Issue > Clear Contradiction: Not just Inconvenient, Expensive, Difficult

Gov’t Right to Ask Citizens do Difficult Things > Taxes & Conscription

?? If Obey this Command of Man > DISOBEY Clear Command of God

Peter & John could WALK Away with No PAIN or PUNISHMENT

SUBMIT Quietly to Council’s Demands – DISOBEY Command 1.8!

Firm Resolve brought Trouble > RESOLVE made them LIKE Christ

If DISOBEY Gov’t then Expect the Wrath of the Gov’t

Wang Yi > Highly Trained Lawyer in China > Heard Gospel / SAVED

Grew in Xtian Maturity & Knowledge > CALLED to be Pastor

1st Day on JOB had TERMINATION Strategy – Knew Collide / CHINA

Official LAW of PRC > FREEDOM of Religion > Window Dressing

Founder of Early Rain Covenant Church in Chengdu / 100’s Members

Preached/Taught Bible – Opened Christian School – College – Seminary

Wrote 6-page Rebutal of Allegations expected Chinese Communist Party

Arrested Dec 2018 > held w/out Charges until Sentenced Dec 2019

9 yrs Prison “inciting subversion state power / illegal business activities”

US Govt > October 2023 > almost 7 years since taken Prisoner:

Wang Yi – No contact w/ Family over 2 yrs / 1 visit w/ Wife since Arrest

No phone calls, Not allowed a Bible, NOT EVEN Notebook or Pen!

b. Clarity – Normal: KEEP QUIET, Stay OUT of TROUBLE Now!

vs. 19,20 But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

Peter's Question > Is it RIGHT? – Not Pleasant, Profitable, Popular
 Join Faithful Company of God-Directed Resisters to Unrighteous Laws
 Hebrew Midwives protect Jewish Baby Boys/Moses: Pharaoh's Decree
 Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego refused Bow to Government IDOL
 Jesus gave the FAITHFUL Witness before Pontius Pilate

All these COURTEOUS, RESPECTFUL, but FIRM and RESOLUTE
 the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. 1 Corinth 4.20

CLEAR Message of Peter ONLY Way to GOD >

vs. 10,12 then know this, you and all the people of Israel:....Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

The word 'must' ...is related to the 'name.' Peter is saying that everyone in the world *must* be saved only by the name of Jesus. Ajith Fernando

Majority Opinion in World > Does NOT Matter WHAT you Believe

As long as you are SINCERE and NICE – have RAINBOW Sticker!

Nobody likes Narrow-Minded EXCLUSIVE Claims of Absolute Truth

c. Compassion

True to Scripture you MUST be Exclusivist > No other Savior, but Jesus

True to Scripture, Must NOT be Arrogant > Not about You but JESUS

Receiving a Savior requires Rejection of Self > Confession of Failure

True Salvation leads to Gratitude & Glory to God our Savior

Example of Jesus > Firm Convictions & Fervent Compassion

Church GREW Amidst Opposition & Arrest – 2 Verses linked by Luke

vs. 3,4 They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.

You can put preachers in prison, you can even kill the preacher...
but you cannot silence or slay the Word of God.

Acts 4.¹And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, ²greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. ³And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. ⁴But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand. ⁵On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, ⁶with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. ⁷And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” ⁸Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, ¹⁰let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. ¹¹This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. ¹²And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” ¹³Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. ¹⁴But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. ¹⁵But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, ¹⁶saying, “What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.” ¹⁸So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, ²⁰for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.” ²¹And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people, for all were praising God for what had happened. ²²For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old.

Lord Jesus we call upon your Name! You are God's Cornerstone. All the Promises of God are "Yes" and "Amen" in You! So, our confidence in You is sure and strong. Yet, we see storms rage around our world and in our lives. War, terror, famine, and death – like the Horsemen of the Apocalypse – march across our troubled world. Many are suffering and grieving. Right here on our beautiful island, many struggle with sickness, addictions, financial troubles, and despair – leading some to suicide.

Lord, hear our prayer for people and places far and near...

Personal Prayer of Intercession for Others and Yourself

"...let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4.10-12) Lord, thank you for the courage and clarity of Peter and John, Pastor Wang Yi and many others imprisoned for their faith, and Christians who proclaim the Prince of Peace in Israel, Gaza, West Bank, Lebanon, Jordan, and even in Iran today. Lord, open doors for the Gospel, from the schools and homes of Kohala to the ends of the earth.

"The word of God is not bound! Therefore, (we) endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him" (2 Timothy 2.9-12).