

Acts Chapter 4

V: 1-2 Peter, being filled with the Holy Spirit is using the miracle of the lame man's healing as an opportunity to preach the gospel to those gathered in the Temple at the time for evening prayer.

- As he is preaching they are interrupted by the “religious authorities” who aren't pleased. Whenever there is a real work of the Lord, the enemy will always show up to try to stop it.
- The priests, the captain of the Temple, meaning the Temple police, and the Sadducees.
- There were two main religious sects in those days in Judaism: the sect of the Pharisees, and the sect of the Sadducees.
- The Pharisees taught and practiced the oral traditions of the Law. It was the Pharisees that were the chief instigators in putting Jesus to death because they were traditionalists and followed the oral traditions.
- Jesus had rebuked them because their traditions actually nullified the Law of God, and He was constantly violating their traditional observance of the Sabbath amongst other things.
- The Sadducees were the religious liberals of the day, they were very materialistic, they greatly spiritualized the scriptures to fit their religious bent, like many in our current culture that twist scriptures to fit their lives as opposed to living by the scriptures.
- The Sadducees had some other issues, they didn't believe in the supernatural nor in the resurrection of the dead; now Peter and John were preaching the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and that the people who receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior could also receive that same resurrection.
- Preaching in Jesus' name, and preaching the resurrection of the dead, the Sadducees had issues with both of these things.

V: 3-4 The Temple guards / police physically took Peter & John, and whoever was with them into custody overnight.

- The fruit had already been harvested before the guards got there, 5,000 men had already come to faith in Jesus.
- Cause and effect: “... many of them which heard the word believed...”

Romans 10:17 “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”

- We see the Holy Spirit moving amongst His people:

Acts 2:47b “... And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

V: 5-6 The next morning they gather the full council, the Sanhedrin including the rulers, elders, scribes, the official High Priest, and the behind the scenes High Priest.

- The same players are still in place from two months prior when Peter denied Christ while at the enemy’s fire. Now he’s on fire by the power of the Holy Spirit and he’s proclaiming Jesus to the same men that had Jesus crucified.
- **Annas was the official High Priest, recognized and appointed by the Romans, but Caiaphas was still the de facto High Priest recognized by the Jews and the real power behind the scenes.**
- Peter and John were arrested, so we don’t know who this other John is, nor Alexander.

V: 7 I’m thinking of that old adage: “don’t ask the question if you don’t want to know the answer...”

- By what power, by what name - this is all a mystery to them.

We already know the answers to their questions:

Matthew 28:18 “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, all power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.”

- The council wasn’t really interested the truth; they were attempting to entrap the disciples by asking a leading question, and hopefully cause them to condemn themselves.

Turn to:

Deuteronomy 13:1-5 “¹If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, ²and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; ³thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. ⁴Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear Him, and keep His commandments, and obey His voice, and ye shall serve Him, and cleave unto Him. ⁵And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to

thrust thee out of the way which the Lord thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee.”

- They hoped to apply this part of the Law when as they expected Peter and John claimed that this miracle was done in the name of Jesus.

V: 8 Again Luke is quick to mention, to make sure that we know that Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit.

Zechariah 4:6 “... Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit saith the Lord of hosts.”

- It has to be by the power of the Holy Spirit, because if it's not then it's by our own power, by the flesh - and the works of the flesh are never pleasing to God.

Romans 8:8 “So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”

- Peter acknowledges them, addresses them respectfully:

V: 9-10 Peter starts out by stating that what has happened to this lame man, this impotent man, that it was a “good deed” his birth defect has been reversed, he is pointing out the obvious absurdity of being arrested to “healing” someone.

- “**Made whole**” in **Acts 4:9** is a translation of the same Greek word (G4982) that is translated “**saved**” in **Acts 4:12**, for salvation means wholeness and spiritual health. Jesus Christ is the Great Physician who alone can heal mankind's greatest malady, the sickness of sin
- **The lame man was not just healed physically, he was healed spiritually, he was saved!**
- Peter also points out that this is a miracle accomplished by or in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.
- Peter is again careful to give glory to God for the great thing He has done.

Just like Jesus taught His disciples as they prayed:

Matthew 6:13 “... For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”

Isaiah 42:8 “I am the Lord: that is My name: and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images.”

- Peter is right back to preaching the same seeker friendly sermon as before; he identifies Jesus Christ of Nazareth - whom you crucified!

- And whom God raised from the dead. Preaching Jesus, preaching the resurrection, no holding back.

Romans 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

- Peter pretty much just said everything that they didn't want to hear.

We see here once again that God is patient:

2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

- The Jewish leaders had rejected the message and ministry of John the Baptist, they had done the same with Jesus. But here they are once again hearing the servants of the Lord preach the Gospel of Salvation to them, giving them another opportunity to repent and be saved.

V: 11 Peter goes on to tell them, to instruct them that Jesus is the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy - He's the One they were supposed to be looking for, but ended up rejecting - just as scripture said they would.

Isaiah 28:16 “Therefore thus saith the Lord God, behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make hast.” (Be forced to flee.)

Matthew 21:42 “Jesus saith unto them, did ye never read in the scriptures, that stone which the builder rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.”

Psalms 118:22-23 “²²The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. ²³This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.”

- The story is told of how these prophetic events were actually played out in real life. During the construction of Solomon's Temple all the large stones were hewn out of solid rock away from the actual Temple site, in quarries. The stones were cataloged and numbered then sent to the quarry as they were needed.
- At one point a certain stone was sent that the builders didn't recognize, it wasn't on their list so to speak. So they set it aside, it took many years to construct the Temple and as they near completion they requested the chief cornerstone be delivered. They received word back that it had already been delivered. Upon further investigation they found the cornerstone that the builders had rejected, off to the side covered over with weeds.

- The “good news” of salvation, the Gospel, must always be accompanied by the bad news of sin and the need for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.
- There can be no true faith in Christ unless first there is true repentance from sin.

V: 12 Peter makes a very bold statement that contradicts their whole way of life: this is also a very exclusive statement.

- “Neither is there salvation in any other...” Not in the keeping of the Law, not in being a good Jew, going to synagogue. Not in religion - only in the name of Jesus, only in a personal relationship with Him!

John 14:6 “... I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.”

- Peter is being very direct, but he gets even more explicit:

“For there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

- Like Jesus’ statement in **John 14:6** this eliminates any other options - there is no other way.

Isaiah 43:11 “I, even I, am the Lord; and beside Me there is no saviour.”

- People generally dislike the exclusive claims of Jesus because they go against their pre-conceived and or erroneous concepts of God and morality as it relates to their lives.
- The “all roads lead to heaven” mentality is dominant in our culture, which permits men to create their own rules and live as they please.
- Peter is simply repeating (no pun there...) what God has already declared; that there is only one name by which men are saved - and it’s the name of Jesus.
- Jesus is the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew name Yeshua - which means “God is salvation.” His name implies or declares His mission. God sent His Son to be the Savior of the World.

V: 13 They recognized the boldness of Peter’s preaching; they knew somewhat of his history that he was a simple fisherman and the seeming contradiction that a simple fisherman shouldn’t be so knowledgeable of the scripture or be able to quote them, or for that matter to preach so forcefully - then they realized that Peter had been taught, disciplined by Jesus.

- In reality Peter, John, and the rest of the Apostles had gone through three years of “graduate study” under the greatest Teacher who ever lived.
- They had the privilege of sitting under the One who wrote the Book and got to listen while He expounded on the Word and opened up the Scriptures to them. They were way more educated than any of the Pharisees, or PHD’s of today.
- Unless the Spirit of God is the One guiding and teaching then it’s all for naught anyway.

1 Corinthians 2:14 “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

- It doesn’t matter how many letters you have behind your name, if you’re not born again, if you don’t have the Holy Spirit living in you then you can’t truly understand the scriptures, and you’re disqualified to teach the scriptures.
- Another misconception they had was their conclusion that Peter and John had “been” with Jesus in a past tense way when in fact just as Jesus had promised, Jesus was with Peter and John at that very moment.

Matthew 28:20 “... lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.”

- We need to be careful that we never have a “past tense” relationship with Jesus, or always talk about what the Lord did back in the day; but what is He doing now? We need to have a “present tense” relationship with Jesus!

V: 14 The boldness of Peter combined with the living proof of the impotent man’s obvious healing left them in a place of not being able to speak against it.

- This might have been a clue to them as well, the last time they weren’t able to give an answer was when they were being challenged by Jesus after asking Him some difficult questions.

John 3:2 “The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with Him.”

John 11:47 “Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, what do we? For this man doeth many miracles.”

- That is the power of our own testimonies; the difference between our lives before we knew the Lord, and the lives we now live in the Lord.

- One of the greatest needs in the church today is the witness of lame men who are standing whole, spiritually speaking.
- It's a little thing, but note that the man who had been lame, who now was healed - is standing with the Apostles, identifying with them in their time of trial, identifying with followers of Jesus, and thereby with Jesus Himself.

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- While they don't like the fact that Peter and John are preaching in the name of Jesus and that this previously lame man is standing there as living proof as to the power of Jesus name, the power by which the man was healed. They can't speak against it, at the moment it is an undeniable fact.

V: 15-17 The council had the Apostles removed from their presence so that they could confer.

- Luke is an investigator - if the Apostles weren't in the room, how would anyone have known about their deliberations? Luke must have talked to one of the member of the council who later came to know the Lord, who related the facts to Luke.
- In **Matthew Ch. 12** Jesus healed a man who was blind, deaf, mute, and possessed with an evil spirit. The Pharisee's didn't deny the miracle, they couldn't, so they sought to attribute it to the power of the Devil.

Matthew 12:24 "But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, this fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils."

- Jesus then goes on to warn them about the Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit in **Matthew 12:31**, the rejection of Jesus in the face of irrefutable evidence.
- Pharaoh made the mistake of rejecting the truth over and over again to the point of hardening his heart against God, then God confirmed his heart.
- Jewish proverb: "There are none so blind as those who refuse to see..."

John 12:37-39 ³⁷But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him. ³⁸That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which He spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? ³⁹Therefore they could not believe...

- The council is challenged by the facts, facts that they can't deny yet which they don't want to acknowledge. So they seek to cover it up and silence the witnesses.

- Thus they threaten Peter and John telling them not to speak in the name of Jesus.

V: 18-20 As the council threatens the Apostles not to speak in the name of Jesus, Peter and John give them a very direct answer pretty much indicating that they will continue to do just that.

- Their choice is the same as our choice when it comes to being obedient to the Word of God or to the word of men.

Galatians 1:10 “For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.”

- Their commission came from Jesus along with the empowering of the Holy Spirit:

Acts 1:8 “But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

1 Corinthians 9:16 “For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!”

V: 21-22 They threatened them because they couldn't figure out a way to do anything else to them, they wanted to punish them but they couldn't justify it.

- They were in part motivated by fear because of the people, fear is a poor basis for decisions generally, but that is the way of the world.

2 Timothy 1:7 “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

- There are two indications that this was a genuine miracle of God.
 1. The physical impossibility had been established, the man was lame from birth, and he was over 40 years old, he wasn't faking it, neither could any human power do what was done.
 2. The result was that people glorified God for what was done.

Jesus said:

Matthew 5:16 “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

V: 23-26 Being let go they went back to the church, “their own company” - those they identified with, they were part of the church and the church was part of them.

- As they began to testify as to what had taken place they just kind of end up praising God for who He is and for what He’s done.
- Part of their praise incorporates the word of God as they quote Psalm 2:1-2
- As part of their praise and worship they are declaring that God’s Word is true, it’s all happening just as He predicted or prophesied!

Isaiah 40:8 “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the Word of our God shall stand forever.”

Matthew 5:18 “For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”

- The Apostles, the early church had a very high view of the Word of God, much higher generally than the church today.

Psalm 138:2 “... for thou hast magnified thy Word above all thy name.”

V: 27-28 The anti-Semites of the world often blame the Jews exclusively for having opposed and crucified Jesus, but here we see the early church’s understanding of these things and that it was Herod the ruler of Galilee, Pontius Pilate a Roman, kings and rulers as per **Psalm 2**, then also the Gentiles and the people of Israel - meaning the whole world was against Jesus and responsible for His crucifixion.

- Then there is also the acknowledgment that even though each of these parties had free choice, there is also that aspect of the providence and purposes of God as describe in prophecy.

Acts 2:23 “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.”

V: 29-30 Continuing in prayer - Lord you know what they’re demanding, or threatening.

- Then he says Lord give us the power and ability to speak even more boldly and to do mighty miracles and signs in the name of Jesus.
- They don’t ask God to shut them up, or to silence their threats, or bind the hands of the religious authorities to fulfill those threats, they ask for the power to do what He’s called them to do.
- Spurgeon “Lord, don’t lighten my burden, give me stronger shoulders...”

Matthew 10:28 “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

- This prayer pretty much follows the pattern laid out by Jesus in the “Lord’s prayer” **Matthew 6** and **Luke 11**.

V: 31-32 As they finish praying God seemingly signals His approval as the place where they are assembled shakes - that’s powerful prayer! (The original Quakers...)

- The result of their prayer is that they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and with that empowering wherein the Word of God was spoken with boldness.

James 5:16 “... The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

- Part of what made their prayer was so powerful and effective was that they had a right perspective on things and didn’t just declare what they hoped to receive, but they prefaced their prayer with prayerful worship and praise, they gave glory to God in seeking His face, acknowledging and glorifying who He is.
- A second result of this move of the Spirit in their midst was unity:

Ephesians 4:3 “Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

1 Peter 3:8 “Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.”

- God’s design and desire for the church, for the body of Christ is that we would be united under His leadership.

Psalms 133:1 “Oh, how good, and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.”

- There are few things that God describes in hateful terms:

Proverbs 6:16-19 “¹⁶These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto Him: ¹⁷A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, ¹⁸an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, ¹⁹a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.”

- Not everyone was required to surrender all their stuff for the common or communal good, they just didn’t hang on to it the same way, they learned to share and to minister to each other.

Acts 2:44-45 “⁴⁴And all that believed were together, and had all things common;
⁴⁵And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.”

V: 33 God gave them great power to speak and witness of the resurrection of Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.

V: 34-35 This is the 3rd mention of what began as a sort of communal living, everyone sharing. It always breaks down because people are involved...

- The motive here is love for Jesus, and compassion for those around them.

V: 36-37 We're introduced to Joses, or Joseph which means "adding" - he was well named "the son of consolation / encouragement" because he would later bridge the gap between Paul and the Apostles in Jerusalem.