

## Acts Chapter Four

### Acts 4:1-4

**And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple *guard*, and the Sadducees, came upon them, being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in jail until the next day, for it was already evening. But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.**

- Jesus had the most trouble with the Pharisees—the church has the most trouble from the Sadducees (Matt 22:23). The Sadducees included the High Priest and his family—they were Jewish aristocrats.
- Peter preaches to the Jewish leaders. These are the ones in religious power and had rejected God's purposes for themselves. They kept guard of the Temple, and oversaw the sacrificial system. They were the ones who did business with the governor.
- Sadducees are at great odds with the church due to their great emphasis on preaching the resurrection of Jesus.
- In the early days of this revolution—the church is still few in number—they have inexperienced leadership, did not fight back, and were opposed by the established religious institution. The church grows in spite of opposition. Opposition, rightly perceived, is an opportunity—strength training.
- To believe in resurrection—was the belief that 'God would restore all things'. This message draws 5000 more to follow Christ.
- The Pharisees did believe in resurrection. They were a radical populist group at that time.
- Temple guard—police force for the Temple area.

### Acts 4:5-10

**And it came about on the next day, that their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem; and Annas the high priest *was there*, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent. And when they had placed them in the center, they *began to* inquire, "By what power, or in what name, have you done this?" Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people, if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, let it be**

**known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by this *name* this man stands here before you in good health.**

- Rulers—men of power
- Scribes—men of learning—professional students and teachers of the OT. Their disciples are called the Pharisees.
- Brought before Annas—former high priest. Brought before Caiaphas—high priest and leader of the Sanhedrin—the one who condemned Jesus to death. Priests were guardians of the Jewish faith. They thought that followers of Jesus were leading people astray into false worship (Deut 13).
- By what power/in what name—have you done this—Jesus had been accused of functioning by the power of Beelzebul (Lu 11:14-23). They were being questioned by those who had roles of authority among men, "holding to a form of godliness but denying its power"(II Tim 3:5).
- The name of Jesus not only brought the gift of healing—but it is the location of the new Temple of God.
- The Jesus they crucified—the Jesus God raised—the Jesus who heals.

#### **Acts 4:11-12**

**"He is the **STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED** by you, **THE BUILDERS**, *but WHICH BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone*. "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved."**

- He is the stone that the builders rejected (Ps 118:22). The chief stone in building the church was offered to the Jews as 'builders' first.
- The cornerstone is the key stone in the foundation.
- Refers to Daniel 2—stone cut from mountain that would destroy image of pagan empire.
- Peter proclaims Jesus as the only way of salvation. The world hates such statements. Persecution arises from such exclusive claims. Biblical teaching allows no other way. This is foundational to our gospel—it is the reason why Christians are considered intolerant.

#### **Acts 4:13-17**

**Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were**

**marveling, and *began* to recognize them as having been with Jesus. And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in reply. But when they had ordered them to go aside out of the Council, they *began* to confer with one another, saying, "What shall we do with these men? For the fact that a noteworthy miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. "But in order that it may not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to any man in this name."**

- Uneducated: Martyn Lloyd Jones, Hudson Taylor, Spurgeon, D.L. Moody, William Carey.
- Educated: Moses, Daniel, Paul, Augustine, Martin Luther, Billy Graham.
- Untrained (2399 idiots)= a common man as opp. either to a man of power or a man of education and learning. The same word we get the English word 'idiot' from—but it has a very different meaning. It does not mean a person deficient in natural capacity or understanding. This same description is used of Jesus in John 7:14-19, Mk 1:22.
- Marvelled—they had used Ps 118 with great wisdom and insight.
- Confident because they knew Him and had relationship with Him. They were filled with His Spirit.
- They were not religiously educated like the rabbis. Education is not the qualifier—they had been with Jesus.
- Recognizing someone who has been with Christ—I Cor 2:4-8, II Cor 2:14-16—the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him (power of fragrance).
- The Church—later—will become the persecutor. They will arrest and control other believers—demonstrating that they have not 'been with Jesus'.
- They have boldness from the Holy Spirit to witness.
- Seeing the man healed—they had nothing to say—when we have fruit it speaks to those around us who are observing. Yet seeing a miracle does not change their hearts.
- Message not refuted. They are released for fear of the people, not fear of God. Told not to spread their message—but message cannot be contained.
- Paul was probably among this conferring leadership and able to later communicate to Luke what took place (Acts 26:10).

## Acts 4:18-22

**And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard." And when they had threatened them further, they let them go (finding no basis on which they might punish them) on account of the people, because they were all glorifying God for what had happened; for the man was more than forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.**

- "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge"—we all must address this same choice.
- Peter and John respond: "we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard"—There are things that each one of us are responsible to herald (some things that only you have seen and heard).
- Definition of fellowship—sharing what you have seen and heard (I John 1:1-3)
- Since this man is more than 40—everyone would be familiar with him.
- Jewish leaders are more responsive to public opinion than to the fear of the Lord—2000 have just been added to the church. Hostile audience cannot deny this miraculous healing.

## Acts 4:23-26

**And when they had been released, they went to their own *companions*, and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard *this*, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, "O Lord, it is Thou who DIDST MAKE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM, who by the Holy Spirit, *through* the mouth of our father David Thy servant, didst say,**

**'WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE,  
AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE FUTILE THINGS?**

**'THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TOOK THEIR STAND,  
AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER  
AGAINST THE LORD, AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST.'**

- The church worships as a result of this encounter. They see the situation from the viewpoint of scripture, not just their fear, or with their mind and emotions.
- Lifted their voices—bold prayer
- O Lord—not the normal word for 'Lord'—it is 'despotes'—a slave owner or ruler that has power that cannot be questioned.
- They begin their prayer by reminding themselves Who God is. They do things in the right order—worship is first. It magnifies the Lord and enlarges their perspective. They are not fear driven, but faith driven.
- They do not ask God to end persecution—but to open doors for them in the midst of it.
- Psalm 2—when David wrote them—God will bring peace and justice through him. Jesus, now the anointed King—will fulfill Ps 2 as well. Peter recognizes God speaking through David in this Psalm.
- When we pray—we can see our circumstances in light of God's Word.
- Romans 1:3-5

### **Acts 4:27-31**

**“For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur. “And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Thy bond-servants may speak Thy word with all confidence, while Thou dost extend Thy hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Thy holy servant Jesus.” And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and *began* to speak the word of God with boldness.**

- Ask the Lord to take note of their threats
- Request boldness and confidence—fresh infilling of the H.S. They are filled repeatedly—immersion in the Spirit must be constant.
- A prayer of submission and authority for the sake of the Kingdom of God.
- This request is about God's causes and glory—not their own comfort.
- Indicates Who does the healing.
- They are asking for things that will lead to further confrontation.
- Earth quakes in response—Acts 4:31

## Acts 4:32-37

**And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one *of them* claimed that anything belonging to him was his own; but all things were common property to them. And with great power the apostles were giving witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales, and lay them at the apostles' feet; and they would be distributed to each, as any had need.**

And Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means, Son of Encouragement), and who owned a tract of land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

- Description of a true covenant community. All had experienced forgiveness of sin and debt—accomplished by the Lord and His death. Jubilee had been announced in Luke 4 when Jesus quotes Isaiah 61.
- Congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul.
- James 4:1-4—the source of quarreling and conflicts among you is your pleasure waging war in your members—you lust and do not have—envious and cannot obtain—so you commit murder. Selflessness is the basis of unity.
- Because of their unity—they regarded people above possessions. They recognized God as the owner of all.
- They were ready to regard one another's needs above their own. There was not a needy person among them. Sharing was not based on equality, but on need—distributed accordingly.
- Deuteronomy 15:4—there will be no needy person among you—because the Lord is sure to bless you in the land that He is giving you....
- What you do with money and possessions demonstrates what kind of community you are.
- Communism=what is yours is mine—I'll take it.....Christianity=what is mine, is yours—I'll share it.
- So many new believers—travelers who had not anticipated remaining in Jerusalem.
- Church must discern the truly needy (I Tim 5:3). If one can work, he should (II Thes 3:10-12, I Tim 5:8). If a family can provide instead of the church, they should do so (I Tim 5:3-4). Those being supported should serve the body (I Tim 5:5, 10). Provision should be for basic needs (I Tim 6:8). Character should be addressed by the church (I Tim 5:9-13).



# Acts Chapter Four—Workbook

## Key Words:

## Harmonize:

Read all of Psalm 2

## Dig:

- 1) What does the "Name" of Jesus have to do with being saved?
- 2) How are Peter and John described in this chapter?
- 3) What names are used for God in chapter four?
- 4) What is the Sanhedrin?
- 5) Which verse in this chapter is most offensive to non-believers today?
- 6) What reason is given for the crucifixion of Jesus in this chapter?
- 7) What did the believers request from the Lord in prayer?

## Discuss:

- 1) What are the benefits of suddenly having 5000 new believers added to the church? What are the drawbacks?

- 2) When it comes to submission to earthly government leaders or spiritual leaders, when should someone disregard or disobey their direction? (vs 19)
- 3) Consider the prayer in vs 24-30. Can we pray something similar to this? Is the same outcome possible?
- 4) Look at the description of the church in vs 32-35---Discuss the benefits, drawbacks, and—are there similarities with your church?

**Point of Prayer:**

Pray Acts 4:29 for your church or fellowship of believers.

**Integrate:**

What other scriptures come to mind as you read this chapter?

**Application:**

- 1) How do YOU recognize someone's intimacy level with Jesus? (vs 13)
- 2) Verse 20 could be the definition of giving a testimony. What have you seen or heard recently?
- 3) What circumstances/characteristics allow a group of believers to live in harmony?
- 4) What do you spend the majority of your time watching/ listening to?
- 5) If you were described by others for what you talk about the most—what are you known for talking about?

- 6) Have you experienced persecution because of your faith? Share.
- 7) Share something you watched / saw 'go viral'.
  
- 8) How is being 'one heart and one mind' achieved among believers? How difficult is this to sustain? What kinds of things or people contribute to this kind of 'oneness'?
  
- 9) Do you anticipate the miraculous when you pray?