

“Arrested For Speaking In The Name Of Jesus”

Acts 4:1-22

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Teaching Aim: To explore the circumstances surrounding the arrest of the Apostles Peter and John at the temple complex in Jerusalem. To realize they had done nothing wrong, God had used them in healing a man who was crippled from birth. To recognize Peter and John used this opportunity and the large crowd gathering to give credit to the resurrected Lord Jesus for the healing. To understand by doing so, the two became a threat to the Sanhedrin & to the religious establishment.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (BIBLE STUDY)

Part I: The arrest of Peter and John for teaching the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 4:1-4)

1. In **Acts chapter 3**, we saw God use the Apostles Peter and John in the healing of a man who was lame from his mother’s womb. This man had been crippled for over 40-years, a painfully long time. The healing of this well-known beggar should have been reason for celebration at the temple, for some it was, but not for the religious leaders. Why?

2. Two groups of people and an individual are specifically mentioned in **verse 1**. Who are they? Who was the individual specifically responsible for maintaining order at the temple complex? (See Commentaries) What was the significance of his position and how did it relate to the High Priest? Why do you think Peter’s preaching on the resurrection of Jesus Christ made these religious leaders so angry (**vs. 2**)? What religious sect controlled the Sanhedrin? What did they believe and not believe in? (Hint: Search online)

3. How angry were these individuals at what they heard preached and the crowd that was gathering (**vs. 3**)? Why did they arrest Peter and John so late in the day? Note: The hour of prayer was 3:00pm and had already taken place, all official business was done for the day. Peter and John would now have to wait until the Sanhedrin reconvened in the morning for their trial to take place. As a result, the two would be held under arrest overnight.

4. Even though Peter and John had been arrested, many people came to faith in Christ that day (**vs. 4**). How many? (See Commentaries.) Church Father Tertullian said, *“The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.”* How have you seen this truth played out in our own day?

Part II: Peter and John tried before the Jewish High Priest and Sanhedrin for their teachings on the resurrection (Acts 4:5-12)

1. On the following morning, the religious leaders of the Jews gathered for a special meeting of the Sanhedrin to address the issue of Peter and John preaching that Jesus had resurrected from the dead. Which leaders are specifically mentioned in **verses 5 & 6**? Which of these leaders were also involved in the trials of Jesus just a few months prior?
2. What do we know about the following four individuals: Annas, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander? How are these four men related? Why was Jesus taken first to Annas during His trial? What can we learn about Caiaphas and his view of Jesus from **John 11:47-52**?
3. As we come to **verse 7**, the two men had now been called to stand before the High Priest, his family and very likely the entire the Sanhedrin. What question did the Jewish leadership ask the men? Notice that nobody denied the miracle, they just wanted to know who was behind it. The religious leaders refused to believe that Jesus had resurrected from the dead.
4. One might think Peter and John would be nervous at their trial before the Jewish leadership. What can we learn about Peter's demeanor from **verse 8**? Note: Whenever Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit, a dynamic sermon was about to follow. What, if any, difference is there between "*the baptism of the Holy Spirit*" and "*the filling of the Holy Spirit*?"
5. When does the baptism of the Holy Spirit occur? (See **1 Cor. 12:12-13**) When did it occur for you? When are we filled with the Holy Spirit? Note: Only those who have been baptized in the Holy Spirit can be filled with the Holy Spirit. (See **Rom. 8:14; 15:13; Eph. 5:18**) Have you ever been filled with the Holy Spirit, and if so, what was it like?
6. In **verse 9**, Peter laid it on the line, he and John had done nothing wrong. The two were being judged for being used by God to heal a man who had been lame since birth, the leaders were being unjust. This brings up an interesting question, if the religious leaders had walked by the lame beggar almost every day, why hadn't they healed him?

7. Then in **verse 10**, Peter told the High Priest and those with him that the man had been healed in the name of Jesus. Why would the religious leaders have a problem with Peter saying this? After bringing glory to Jesus, what accusation did Peter make against the religious leaders in **verse 10**? What proof did Peter use to demonstrate that Jesus really did rise from the dead? How complete was the healing of this man?

8. What Old Testament passage did Peter refer to when he said, *"This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone?"* (See **Psalm 118:20-22**) What is a cornerstone (**vs. 11**)? (Hint: Search online) What is its purpose? In what way is Jesus the Chief Cornerstone? How is Jesus holding up the walls of both Judaism and the Church?

9. What monumental teaching is found in **verse 12**? Today *"tolerance"* is the name of the game for everyone except Christians. Why do you think the world has such a hard time when it comes to Jesus? What makes **verse 12** so controversial? (See **John 14:6; 1 Tim. 2:5; Acts 16:31**) Does the world system have any place for exclusivism today?

Part III: Peter and John are commanded not to speak at all or teach in the name of Jesus anymore (Acts 4:13-22)

1. What can we learn about Peter's teaching in **verse 13**? What caused this boldness? What did the Jewish religious leaders consider Peter & John to be? Were they? Who did Peter & John study under for at least three + years? Do you know of pastors today who are looked down upon because they don't meet the education standards of the world religious system?

2. James A. Steward said, *"In the New Testament there is no distinction between clergy & laity. This distinction is a relic brought over from Romanism."* Is he right or wrong? What can we learn from **1 Pet. 2:9-10**? How should understanding this verse affect your ministry?

3. What kind of an effect did the healed man's presence have over this meeting (**vs. 14**)? What did the council do so that they could confer among themselves (**vs. 15**)? Why did they do this? What question did the leadership ask each other in **verse 16**? Did the religious leaders feel like they were backed into a corner? If so, why?

4. Was the council attempting to learn the truth in this case, or were they trying their best to avoid learning the truth about Jesus (**vs. 17**)? Do you know people who don't want to hear the truth of the gospel message? Why do you think they feel that way? (See **2 Cor. 4:3-4**)

5. What decision did the leadership come to in **verses 18 & 19**? Did Peter and John agree with this decision (**vs. 20**)? Do Peter and John's actions seem contrary to the following Bible verses? (See **Rom. 13:1-7; Tit. 3:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:13-14**) Why?

6. Is there ever a time when Christians are to disobey the governing authorities? Describe how the following statement applies to us today: *"We are to obey the governing authorities UNLESS they command us to do something that God forbids or forbid us from doing something that God Commands."* What can we learn about our Christian mission from **Matt. 28:18-20**? Note: It is important that we remember disobedience by Christians should be the exception and not the rule. Christians should be model citizens in any country.

7. What were the religious leaders forced to do in **verse 21**? Why (**vs. 22**)? William MacDonald wrote, *"Peter and John could not agree to such a restriction. Their first loyalty and responsibility was to God, not to man. If they were honest, the rulers would have to admit this. The apostles had witnessed the resurrection and ascension of Christ. They had sat under His teaching day after day. They were responsible to bear witness to their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."* What are some of the issues that we as Christians might have to stand against the governing authorities today?

8. What can we learn from **Matt. 10:32-33**? Why is this passage important for every Christian to understand?

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- Peter and John were arrested because they taught the people at the temple complex that Jesus had risen from the dead.
- The Sadducees were the dominant party in the Sanhedrin, they were the liberals of the day.
- The Sadducees believed there was no resurrection, no angels, only followed the first five books of the Bible (the Pentateuch), rubbed shoulders with the Romans and the wealthy.
- Peter and John's teaching was a threat to the authority and influence of the Sadducees.
- Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Peter never missed an opportunity in the early chapters of Acts to preach the gospel whenever he had an audience.
- The High Priest commanded Peter and John not to speak or preach in the name of Jesus.
- Peter and John refused to obey the High Priest and the ruling council of the Jews.
- The general rule to follow: We are to obey the governing authorities *UNLESS* they command us to do something that God forbids, or forbid us from doing something that God commands.