

Episode #1126 Acts 4 Part 1-Guilty of a Good Deed

I. Acts is unique in the New Testament. Rather than the ministry of Jesus Christ on earth, it focuses on what came after, when the Lord had ascended back into heaven. The Lord left His disciples with many commands to carry out, and Acts tells us how they did them.

II. Peter has used the occasion of the healing of a lame man to proclaim Jesus Christ to those dwelling at Jerusalem. Yet the Sanhedrin, the same corrupt, political body in Israel that condemned Jesus to death, hear of this proclamation and are furious about it.

III. Arrested in the Temple. Acts 4:1-4.

- A. Acts 4:1. This chapter takes up right where the previous chapter left off. These religious leaders have been informed what was going on, and are unhappy about it. Acts 4:16: they were in a fix. Something about a beggar like that fastens itself on our attention.
- B. Verse 2. Greek for “greatly disturbed” is *diaponeomai*, exasperated. They thought by killing Christ they had put an end to His teaching!
 1. The priests were the ones who had the right to teach in Israel, but they had neglected this, preferring to perform rituals. They set up the scribes to teach, and didn’t like anyone else doing it. They had rejected Jesus Christ, and didn’t want anyone teaching in His name.
 2. The captain was the arresting officer.
 3. The Sadducees did not believe in resurrection (Acts 23:8) or any kind of afterlife. They served God just for benefits in this life. They would not like Christ’s resurrection preached. The Sadducees were usually second in power to the Pharisees, but at this time they had considerable influence. They are like many today: when one agrees with them, he is noble and admirable, but if one disagrees, he is a tool of Satan.
 4. Peter and John were teaching resurrection out from among the dead, which is different from the general resurrection of the dead. This is a special resurrection for those who are in the Lord Jesus.
- C. Verse 3. Greek for “laid hands” is *epebalon*, means that they threw their hands upon them, in other words, took them with a show of force. We should have a more Christ-like attitude than this. It was perhaps too late in the day for a trial, but they also wanted to humiliate them by leaving them in prison overnight. This was injustice, for the only “crime” they had committed was healing a lame man! What must the poor lame man have thought of being thrown in jail for being healed? He was blessed to spend the night with two men like Peter and John, however. There is no miraculous deliverance like on previous occasions, for Peter and John are to put the Sanhedrin on trial the next day, and a miraculous deliverance would have thwarted this.
- D. Verse 4. God’s message through Peter resulted in many more believers. A phenomenal result. He was preaching to Jews who already knew the Scriptures.
 1. In Acts 2:41, it was 3,000, so now about 2,000 more.
 2. John 10:27. These men were already sheep, and now recognized their Shepherd. Those who rejected proved they were not sheep. Remember: this gospel is not producing sheep; it is marking out those who are truly the sheep of Christ.

3. John 10:26. When a sinner believes in the Savior today, it is different. These people already had a relationship with God.
4. “Word” = Greek *logos*, means the expression of God. Their words expressed His mind and His truth, like Christ is the living expression of these things.

IV. Peter, John, and the Sanhedrin. Acts 4:5-22.

- A. Acts 4:5. This was the Sanhedrin, the corrupt group that condemned Christ to death. The scribes probably had the job of recording the proceedings, as well as participating in the trial.
- B. Verse 6. Annas the high priest and Caiaphas were part of the Lord’s trial. It is a great honor to be mentioned in the Bible in a positive light, but a great dishonor to be mentioned like this! The high priest’s family were rulers-they didn’t worry about nepotism.
- C. Verse 7. Peter, John, and the lame man now stand in the very same place the Lord Jesus stood when He faced this court! This was more a judicial investigation, for they were not accused of a crime.
 1. Greek for power is *dunamei*, related to *dunamis*, from which we get dynamite, and means inherent power or power in action.
 2. By what name would be if they did this by someone else’s authority. Did they use their own inherent power, or someone else’s authority, to do this?
 3. Remember what “this” was...healing a lame man, not a good reason to put someone in jail overnight!
 4. In God’s sight, it is not Peter, John, and the lame man who are on trial, but rather the very Sanhedrin themselves. The Lord Jesus Christ had bought pardon for them (Luke 23:34). Now, they get a second chance, but this time they will know clearly.
- D. Verse 8. Peter was the spokesman, but the words were of the Holy Spirit. This was in direct fulfillment of the promise of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 10:19-20. The phrase “Holy Spirit” has no articles in Greek, means “spirit holy,” the power of the Spirit was giving him words. They did not need to stay awake all night formulating a defense. This defense was authored by Him! They were the rulers of Israel. Now they needed to act like it!
- E. Verse 9. The court had been reluctant to say what they were questioning these men about, but Peter makes their “crime” plain. Peter wants all Jerusalem to know the facts of this case. “Has been made well” is a form of *sozo*, which means “saved.” When you heal someone, you are saving him from disease.
- F. Verse 10. Peter now brings God’s accusation before them. They crucified Jesus Christ, God raised Him, and proof of this is this healed lame man standing before them. When we remember that “Christ” and “Messiah” are the same word (John 1:41), we realize that Peter is boldly declaring to the Sanhedrin here the One they killed is their Messiah.

V. Conclusion: the Sanhedrin thought they were putting Peter and John on trial, but it was in fact they who were on trial before God. It is in the name of Jesus Christ that salvation must come to all. Do we believe this?