

Episode #1128 Acts 4 Part 3-Grant Us Boldness

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. The Sanhedrin examined Peter and John, and found they could not answer them. There was the formerly-lame man, giving mute testimony to the fact that God's power was behind their words, Yet in an attempt to save face, they commanded them not to teach any more or speak in the name of Jesus Christ, and let them go. Now, they must decide how to respond.

III. The Apostles Pray for Boldness. Acts 4:23-31.

- A. Acts 4:23. Peter and John report to the others, probably referring to the other ten apostles. They did not brag: their victory was because of inspiration. Instead, they had grave news to share: the Sanhedrin had commanded all testimony regarding Jesus Christ to cease. Now, if they continue their faithful witness, they will be in violation of the highest legal authority in their nation.
- B. Verse 24. The apostles were facing a very critical moment. To disobey a strict order of the supreme Jewish court and lawmaking body was a very serious thing. They turn to God for council and lay the whole matter before Him. "Lord" is the Greek *Despota*. "Despot" in English has been corrupted; it originally meant just an owner or one who exercised absolute power. They recognize His status as Creator. These men were not evolutionists, and did not believe that the things around them had made themselves.
- C. Verse 25. As a unit they determine to disobey men and obey God, and the Divine direction that leads them to disobey their rulers is found in the Psalms. David's words in Psalm 2:1-2, as we learn here, for Psalms does not tell us who wrote this. This originally spoke prophetically of the tribulation, yet the apostles take these words and apply them to their own situation, when their rulers were raging against God.
- D. Verse 26. Their own rulers in this psalm are associated with the Gentiles in their hostility toward Jesus. Their rulers at one time had been under Jehovah's protection, but now these rulers are under God's wrath because of their rejection of the Son of God. In the future the rulers will take their stand against the Lord Jesus and His anointed Prince. The Sanhedrin stood against the Lord Jesus and against His chosen rulers, the apostles. Greek *Christ* is the same as the Hebrew *Messiah*, and both are the same as the English "the Anointed One." David, Saul, and Cyrus are called this in the Bible, as well as Jesus Christ.
- E. Verse 27. They remember the rulers gathering against the Lord Jesus, just like those future rulers will do in the tribulation. "Servant" is the Greek *Paida*, and has to do with one who renders service. It is applied to children, to Herod's servants, to those who served in the temple, to Israel as the nation that renders God service, and so forth. It is like the bellboy, who often was a man but the term used was bellboy. The word does not mean servant or slave, but since it is always connected to service, we had best understand it as meaning servant, though that is not really the meaning of the Greek word. The Lord rendered service to God. Gentiles is the Greek *ethnos* or nations, but here does mean non-Israelite nations.

- F. Verse 28. Two purposes were being worked out in the Lord's death: that of the wicked rulers, and that of God, Who worked through all the corrupt motives of these men to accomplish all His council concerning Jesus Christ.
- G. Verse 29. They call on the Lord to consider the threats of these wicked men. They call themselves the Lord's slaves, Greek *doulois*. The Romans considered this a dishonorable word, but they considered it an honor to be slaves of the Lord Jesus. That is what they are in regard to these matters, for they have no will of their own that they can follow in these things. They make their request: for boldness. Few who preach the Word today have this, as they must worry about making their livelihood off the Word. Speaking generally gets them into less trouble. We are sorely in need of those who will speak the Word of God without fear.
- H. Verse 30. These things would give them boldness. These were the "signs following," Mark 16:17-18, which were God's part of their mission. Servant is again the Greek *paidos*, meaning one who renders service. They ask for power to be faithful from the One Who served faithfully.
- I. Verse 31. They had a right to ask for these things, John 14:13. The Lord answered them immediately and powerfully. This was a miraculous shaking, not a miraculous earthquake. We cannot doubt the power of these men from God. No one has power like this today. His kingdom was then in the earth, and it was going to shake the very foundations of the world. "Holy Spirit" in Greek is "spirit holy," meaning the power of the Spirit, not His Person. They got the boldness they asked for, and though it doesn't say, we are sure they got the other miracles, too.

IV. The Great Unity. Acts 4:32-37.

- A. Acts 4:32. This is thousands of hearts. The number has grown, but the great unity of Acts 2:44-45 continues, with all sharing their possessions with each other, and their innermost hearts are as one, fulfilling John 17:20-23. They had begun this with the disciples before Christ was crucified. This was the fellowship they continued in. They had one common purse, now continued even though they have become quite a multitude. None of them took advantage of the situation, because God had done a work in their hearts. This in many ways foreshadows the kingdom of God to come.
- B. Verse 33. The apostles (the twelve) are responsible for the public witness. Their witness concerned the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. They did this with power (spirit holy). The Sanhedrin did not stop them at all! God's grace, His undeserved favor, was working powerfully toward them, making them one, and empowering them.
- C. Verse 34. Now they shared more than the possessions they had on hand, but actually sold lands and houses they had (all their investments). This may not have included the ancestral land they received from the Lord, but community land that they owned.
- D. Verse 35. The apostles had control of all this money. They would never be dishonest with it, because they had the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, as the Lord had promised in John 14:26.

V. Conclusion: The apostles knew that, if they continued proclaiming in the name of Jesus, they would be defying the highest authority in the land. They knew this was the right thing to do, but they asked God for the boldness to do it. May we be given boldness by God to speak truth that others do not want to hear. The believers shared all things in common. This shows the great unity that will exist among all in God's kingdom. May we be in fellowship with all who believe.