

Acts 4: 1-22

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Peter and John Before the Sanhedrin - Acts 4:1-22

1. Peter and John were arrested and tried (v. 1).
2. They suffered abuse because they preached the resurrection (v. 2–4).
3. They credited Christ with the power to heal and to change lives (v. 5–10).
4. They proclaimed salvation in Jesus Christ alone (v. 11–12).
5. They gave evidence that they had been with Jesus (v. 13–14).
6. They suffered threats from the religious court (v. 15–18).
7. They refused to compromise their message (v. 19–20).
8. The result: Peter and John were let go (v. 21–22).

Acts 3: 1-11

A. A lame man from birth was begging for alms at the gate of the temple called Beautiful. V. 2

B. The lame man requested alms from Peter and John. V. 3

C. Peter's response to the lame man. V. 4-6

1. Look at us!

2. I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—walk!”

Acts 3: 1-11

D. The lame man did the following V. 7-8:

1. He leaped up and began to walk.
2. He entered the temple with Peter and John.
3. He was walking, leaping and praising God.

Acts 3: 1-11

E. The crowds' reaction V. 8-11:

1. All the people saw the lame man walking and praising God.
2. They were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.
3. They were attracted, wondering and wanting to see what had caused such a miracle.

1. Why did the religious officials approach Peter and John? (4:1-2)

Acts 4: 1-2

1 As they were speaking to the people, the **priests** and the **captain of the temple guard** and the **Sadducees** came up to them,
2 being greatly disturbed because **they were** **teaching the people and proclaiming in** **Jesus the resurrection from the dead.**

They were teaching the people and **proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from** **the dead.**

1. **Priests** – Male descendants of Aaron were priests. There were twenty-four groups, and each group served in the temple for one week twice a year (1 Chron. 24:1–6; 2 Chron. 22:8).
2. **Captain of the temple guard** – He was responsible for the administration of the temple, which meant he was held accountable for the order and any disorder that took place within the temple precincts. In Scripture, the captain was called, the *chief officer* or “the ruler of the house of God” (Jer. 20:1; 1 Chron. 9:11; 2 Chron. 31:13; Neh. 11:11).
3. **Sadducees** – The religious and political liberals of Christ’s day. They were the wealthy, the aristocratic, the governing class of leaders in Israel. Many Sadducees served on the nation’s governing body, the Sanhedrin.
 - a. They **denied the supernatural: the resurrection and miracles, life after death, and the existence of beings in other dimensions such as angels and spirits** (Mt. 22:23; Acts 23:8). To them **there was no heaven or hell, no existence whatsoever except on this earth. A man died and was annihilated, just ceased to exist.**

4. **Pharisees** – They were a sect within Judaism, a powerful religious leadership group, a political leadership group, a learned scholarly group, a lay movement in competition with the priesthood. They were a group of middleclass urban artisans, or some combination of these.

a. They placed great emphasis on oral tradition as well as on the written Torah.

b. The Pharisees acknowledge an afterlife, whether it be heaven or hell.

2. What did the officials do to the apostles? (4:3)

Acts 4: 3

3 And they laid hands on them and put them in jail until the next day, for it was already evening.

They laid hands on them and put them in jail until the next day.

John 21: 18-19

18 Truly, truly I tell you, when you were younger, you used to put on your belt and walk wherever you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will put your belt on you, and bring you where you do not want to go.”

19 Now He said this, indicating by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had said this, He *said to him, “Follow Me!”

Acts 5: 41

41 So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for *His* name.

Acts 9: 15-16

15 But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;
16 for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.”

1 Peter 3: 14-15

14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled,
15 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;

The **authorities**, knowing the nature of man and the situation, **were threatened**.

If the people turned to the *new movement*, the authorities feared:

- a. The loss of the people—their loyalty, recognition, and esteem.
- b. The loss of position, authority, and their livelihood. If they lost the loyalty of the people or allowed a disturbance, the Romans would replace them with other officials.
- c. The people might begin to think that *their doctrine* was wrong. If they allowed the preaching of the resurrection to continue, they would be admitting that God had bypassed them and revealed the truth to *others*.
- d. That if He were truly the risen Son of God, then they were sinners, chief sinners, guilty of denying and rejecting God's Son.

3. In spite of opposition, how did the early church fare? (4:4)

Acts 4: 4

4 But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

Five thousand men were added to the church.

Persecution did not stop the Word and the Holy Spirit from working. Souls were saved despite the abuse and opposition.

Christians are to continue in their preaching and witnessing no matter the opposition.

4. After a night in jail, whom did Peter and John face the next day? (4:5-7)

Acts 4: 5-7

5 On the next day, their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem;

6 and Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent.

7 When they had placed them in the center, they *began to* inquire, “By what power, or in what name, have you done this?”

1. Their rulers, elders and scribes (Sanhedrin)

2. Annas the high priest

3. Caiaphas

4. John

5. Alexander

5. How did Peter's remarks about salvation relate to the healed man, the audience, and the Old Testament passage referring to Christ in Psalm 118:22?
(4:8-12)

Acts 4: 8-12

8 Then **Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit**, said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people,
9 if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well,
10 **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.**
11 "He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, *but* which became the chief corner *stone*.
12 **"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."**

A. 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.**

B. "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.**

5. How did Peter's remarks about salvation relate to the healed man, the audience, and the Old Testament passage referring to Christ in Psalm 118:22?
(4:8-12)

Ps. 118: 22

22 The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief corner *stone*.

Acts 4: 11

11 "He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, *but* which became the chief corner *stone*.

C. The psalmist spoke prophetically of the Messiah. The rejected stone - Jesus Christ, whom men would despise and crucify.

1. God's Son would rise triumphantly from the dead to become the foundation of God's new building, **the church.**

Eph. 2: 19-22

19 So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone,

21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord,

22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

1 Cor. 3: 10-11

10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each person must be careful how he builds on it.

11 For no one can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 2: 4-5

4 And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by people, but is choice and precious in the sight of God,

5 you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

“Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them...”

There are two major factors contributed to **Peter’s boldness** to proclaim the Gospel, even in the face of resistance and persecution:

- a. Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit.
- b. Peter had been with the risen Lord.

1. Jesus Christ is the Head, that is, the Chief Cornerstone of God's building.
2. Jesus Christ alone saves. There is no other Head, no other exalted Lord.

1. The court convened the next morning to put Peter and John on trial.
2. God equipped Peter and John with the Holy Spirit.
3. Peter and John credited Christ with the power to make men whole.

Peter declared the following three critical points:

- a. It was “the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth” that made the man whole.
- b. It was Jesus Christ (Messiah) whom you crucified.
- c. It was Jesus whom God raised from the dead that made the man whole.

6. How did the authorities respond to Peter and John? (4:13-14)

Acts 4: 13-14

13 Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, **they were amazed**, and **began to recognize them as having been with Jesus**.

14 And **seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in reply**.

a. They were amazed.

b. Peter and John's (uneducated and untrained men) boldness and power in the name of Jesus the Nazarene *caused* the rulers to recognize them. The rulers had witnessed the same boldness and power in Jesus. It was this boldness and power that identified these two men as having been with Jesus.

c. The healed lame man was standing with Peter and John, the authorities had nothing to say in reply.

7. After the Sanhedrin consulted together, what action did they take against the apostles?

(4:15-17)

Acts 4: 15-17

15 But when they had ordered them to leave the Council, they *began* to confer with one another,

16 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.

17 “But so that it will not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no longer to any man in this name.”

Let us warn them to speak no longer to any man in this name.”

- 1. They acknowledged that a miracle had been done. The man was made whole.**
- 2. All the people knew the man had been transformed.**
- 3. They could not deny the miracle even though they would have liked to; but the evidence, the lame man made whole, stood before them.**

8. What was the apostles' reply to the judgment handed down by the council?
(4:18-20)

Acts 4: 18-20

18 And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

19 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;

20 for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

1. “Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge;

2. For we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

Christians must be obedient to God at all costs.

1. Peter and John witnessed the death, burial, resurrection and the ascension of Jesus.
2. God is to be obeyed before men.
3. Christ commanded them to preach (Matt. 28: 19-20; Mk. 16: 15; Jn. 20: 21).
4. A man must testify to what he has seen (Acts 1: 9).

9. Why was the Sanhedrin powerless to take action against Peter and John?
(4:21)

Acts 4: 21

21 When they had threatened them further, they let them go (finding no basis on which to punish them) on account of the people, because they were all glorifying God for what had happened;

- a. There wasn't any basis to punish Peter and John.
- b. All the people were glorifying God for the miracle.
- c. The council released Peter and John on account of the people.

10. How old was the man who had been healed? (4:22)

Acts 4: 22

22 for the man was more than forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.

Over 40 years old

1. The power of Christ had taken a man who had been helpless for over forty years and made him completely whole.

2. The result of witnessing was that all the people glorified God.

11. What was amazing about the healing that caused this controversy? (4:22)

Acts 4: 22

22 for the man was more than forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.

The council could not deny the miracle. The lame man stood before them completely healed.